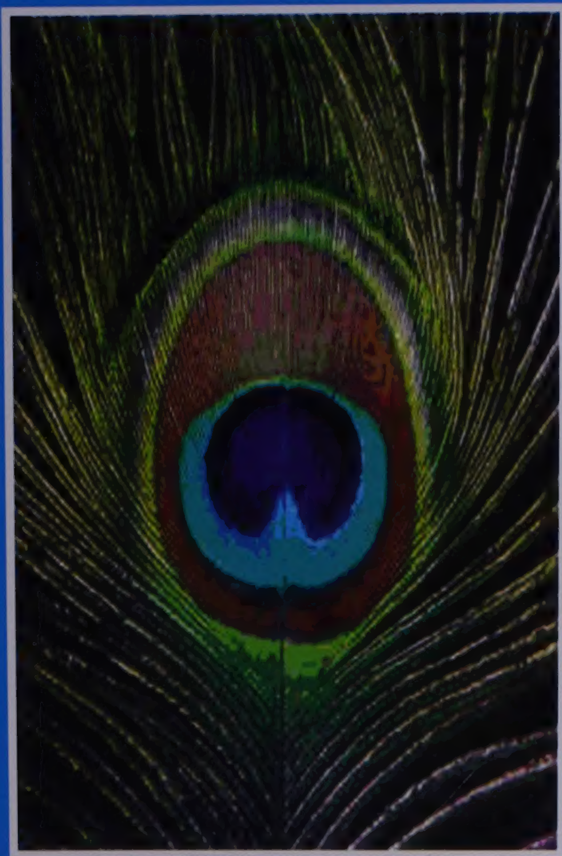
Nagesh D. Sonde



Krishna

A study based on Mahabharata

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व्यासाय विष्णु रूपाय व्यास रूपाय विष्णवे |
नमो वै ब्रह्म निधये वाशिष्ठाय नमो नमः ||

Veda Vyasa is worshiped as Aradhya Devata
at

Shree Kashi Matha Samsthana
A religious Peetha of Gaud Sarasvat Brahmins




To
My own self

With a Prayer :

Not to attempt to be the Wind
that passes through the flute.
But instead be the flute
through which The Wind passes through.
Then the song will make me sing and dance,
Even as flowers sing and dance in abundance.
Then Bliss will surely enter my Being
And enlighten me on the Path.
So let it come to pass
So shall it come to pass
Yes it will come to pass.
That, verily is That.

ॐ तत्सत्

Therefore,
For all those who read my earlier books, with love, kindness and appreciation, some even sharing their thoughts...., in spite of spelling mistakes and grammatical errors, here are my thanks.




Krishna : A Study based on Mahabharata

Contents

I. Foreword

Foreword

I have been writing books primarily on Indian religious philosophies, but have not restricted my study only to Indian philosophies. I have taken interest and have been influenced by religious philosophies in different places, during different periods, living and responding to different racial, social, cultural surroundings and situations. The primary purpose of comparative philosophy, I believe, is not to find out which of these religious philosophies speak of मत्य, the Absolute Prime Existence but how मत्य, the Absolute Prime Existence has been perceived, experienced, reflected and meditated upon by them, bringing out similarity or dissimilarity wherever possible, without being dogmatic, assertive and argumentative, without doubting the enlightenment experienced or justifying the opinions expressed. My journey was sketchy and sporadic in the beginning mental and intellectual, reasonable and rational becoming deeper as I pursued and reflected on them. Therefore, I do not claim to have been aware of the Prime Existence in any particular manner or to any measure or successful even to a little extent.

However, I have sought meanings to the words, listening with heart and reappraising in mind, revising and rededicating, broadening my perception and deepening my understanding, without being in a hurry, without being despondent. When I seem to have failed, I have tried to rise and stand knowing that every step will lead to the other. I believe that my experiences are my responses to the resonance in my heart. They are as real to me as they were real to many others. I may often fail in relating by expressions to my experiences. But no one can deny me the right to say that I have tried and possibly failed. I have made a tryst with my self and I am sure that I will not fail. I do think that I feel from my innermost depth of the heart but the actions which I perform have not necessarily reflect what I believe, since I have realized that in the primordial life one has to speak and act as one would be expected by others to speak and act, without compromising my essence or form of my actions. If some one says that I have not succeeded enough in these attempts, then they do not know, will never know how much I have tried.

The books which I have written were published by me alone. Whosoever were interested in the subject dealt by me, with them I have shared my books and thoughts even with many libraries and others who were interested in the subjects. My wife Vasanti, my sons, Ashish his wife Manisha, Devdatt his wife Veena have supported me in my attempts even my grandchildren bringing books as gifts, which they knew not their importance except that I used to speak of the saints and sages who have authored the books and many more others who have extended their support.

I feel gratified by their love and affection and satisfied with what I have done and thank That Absolute Prime Existence which has encouraged me and blessed me with healthy and fruitful life, energy and enthusiasm for having done what I have done, to do what I am doing and hope the Grace will continue here in this life as well as hereafter to do what I intend do.

Nagesh D. Sonde

II. Backdrop

Introduction

No human being or divine has ever and any where in the world has captured the mind, speech and actions of people over generation and millenniums as *Krishna* has done. In that respect he has been incomparable and unique in his diverse personality accepting and absorbing in himself everything that life is and represents. His uniqueness lies in his being beyond man's empirical understanding reaching absolute spiritual height and retaining his form as undisputed religious icon. He has been the subject matter of legends and literature, political and theological dissertations, controversy and conflict. From age to age his images has changed so much in the minds of the believers and the skeptics, poets and artists having reflected the temper of every age and times that it is difficult to separate the historical Krishna from the mythical one. Yet history has started revealing the secrets of his life and times, that it offers an unclear opening of the window with some definite suggestions of the spiritual playing its role in the temporal world. Yet it has left in many mouths some inconvenient taste, which is difficult to identify, nut which orthodox believers try to gloss over and with which the skeptics have been holding them at ransom. In the early ages when heart ruled the mind of the masses, the *Krishna-form* became dominant the *Krishna-Consciousness* becoming the stuff of highly sensitive thinkers. Evolution has greatly expanded the horizon of the human mind, but has failed miserably the frontiers of human consciousness.

Under the circumstances the modern man is scarcely qualified to understand the declaration made in *Bhagavad Gita* : 'नान्तोऽस्मि मम दिव्याना विभूतीना परन्तप एष तूद्देशतः प्रोक्तो विभूतेर्विस्तरो मया | यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्व श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा | तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोऽंशसम्भवाम्|| अथवा बहुनेतन किं ज्ञानेन तवार्जुन | विष्टभ्याहमिद कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत्||'. His uniqueness lies thus in his being beyond man's empirical understanding reaching absolute spiritual height accepting him as the whole, complete and entirety of divine decent, the *essence* the *Krishna-Consciousness* in incarnation, absorbing in himself everything that life is and represents 'वासुदेवः सर्वमिति' all other incarnations being partial, incomplete and contextual. *Krishna* becomes divided in parts in his anthropomorphic form, one part accepting him alone emotionally as the religious icon and not the *essence* which the *form* represents. It is unfortunate that *Krishna's* iconic influence should have among large masses and in popular religion should have created a dichotomy between his *form* and the *essence* which his *form* should have so eloquently is expected to represent as extensive and comprehensive representation of *Vishnu*, the all-pervading and all-comprehensive deity.

Many will agree with *Einstein* who said, '*The most beautiful and most profound emotion we can experience is the sensation of the mystical . . . He to whom this emotion is stranger, who can no longer wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead. To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and most radiant beauty which our dull faculties can comprehend only in the most primitive forms - this knowledge, this feeling, is at the centre of true religiousness*'. Therefore, knowing that emotive receptivity is stronger than the intellectual, *Krishna* says that whatever form one desires to be communion with him, that communion he makes firm and well-established 'यो यो यां यां तनुं भक्तः श्रद्धयार्चितुमिच्छति | तस्य तस्याचलां श्रद्धां तामेव विदधाम्यहम्||'. Even then among the thousands scarcely one strives for perfection and those who strive and succeed one becomes aware of my existence truly well - 'मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु कश्चिद्यतति सिद्धये | यततामपि सिद्धानां कश्चिन्मां वेत्ति तत्वतः ||'. Therefore emotive receptivity and experience comprehension can only be harbinger to the intellectual receptivity and comprehension leading one to be reflective and one's consciousness to be meditative that 'वासुदेवः सर्वमिति'.

Dvaipayana Krishna was a seer of infinite splendour who enlightened of the immeasurable interplay of the forces of light and darkness - 'द्वया ह प्राजापत्याः, देवाश्चासुराश्च | ततः कानीयसा एव देवाः ज्यायसा असुराः ; त एषु लोकेष्वस्पर्धन्त ;...||' *(Brihad Aranyaka Up. I.iii.1)*, which *Shankara* explains देवs as the enlightened few and

असुरs as the un-enlightened many, struggling with each other for mastery over the worlds both being the descendants of *Prajapati.* ऋत the immutable *cosmic law* and धर्म the perennial principle of righteousness were common for both and frightful punishment being imposed for any failure to follow them, making every element of creation a medium for fulfillment of the divine intent and purpose, either fully and comprehensively as in the case of *Krishna* or partially and for special purpose as in the case of other descents, or indirectly through other elements in nature animate as well as inanimate making the instruments of operation 'निमित्तमात्रं भव सव्यसाचिन्'.

This fundamental principle was demonstrated by *Vyasa* using the constant and recurring struggle for superiority between *Pandavas* and *Kauravas* with the prominent role played by *Krishna.* While *Pandavas* recognized and acknowledged *Krishna's divinity* and accepted him as a friend, a relative, an advisor, intellectual guide, the initiator, moving force, the master mind behind all their actions, *Kauravas* did neither recognize nor respect *Krishna's divinity* at best accepting him as a leader of clan, a statesman among the polity, recognized in the three worlds, who could be a powerful ally and a dangerous adversary. There were still others, though were conscious of his spiritual origin and wise in spiritual matters, were bound by their temporal attributes and inclinations born of nature 'प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वशः |'.

When *Vyasa* recorded the events in *Jaya* in *prosaic* traditional *bardic* form designed and describing *Kuru* family, *Gandhari's* righteousness, *Pandava's* truthfulness, *Kaurava's* misdeeds, he transformed the tale to bring out *Krishna's* greatness and divinity, as the ancient seer born again. He had not pretensions about the characters; *Pandavas* were never accepted as quintessence of virtues nor *Kauravas* were shown as embodiment of evil. Both were shown conscious of the principles of righteousness, though *Pandavas* were more righteous and divinely ordained owing to their divine origin while *Kauravas* were rarely righteous being influenced by sense organs and desires under the influence of dark and obscure forces. *Krishna* was the divine consciousness born establishing himself in प्रकृति, the human form, acting more as a human being with all the imperfections of human body than as an impartial as arbiter as the *Brahman.*

Vaishampayana's austere and noble imagination transformed *Krishna's* personality with striking divine status associated with *vedic Vishnu* ceasing to be इतिहास and becoming more of a scripture of divine consciousness manifest in temporal context. The text thereafter became the vehicle for many diverse *Vyasas* in the generations and centuries that followed, for incorporation of the history of a people, the social, moral, ethical, religious and philosophical consciousness of Indian culture. *Mahabharata* is said to have contained many concealed mystical truths, which *Vyasa* knows, his son *Shuka* knows and perhaps *Sanjaya* too 'ग्रन्थग्रन्थिं तदा चक्रे मुनिगूढं कुतूहलात्| यस्मिन्प्रतिज्ञया प्राह मुनिर्द्वैपायनस्त्विदम्|| अष्टौ श्लोकसहस्राणि अष्टौ श्लोकशतानि च | अहं वेद्मि शुको वेत्ति संजयो वेत्ति वा न वा ||', the study of the *Mahabharata* not being complete unless one unravels the mystical secrets concealed, and it is not sufficient to know the legends relating to the *Krishna-form* unless one becomes wise to the *Krishna-Consciousness* concealed therein.

Mahabharata needs to understood intellectually beginning since all the human actions are performed as inter-play of human attributes and inclination born of nature 'प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वशः |' and 'प्रकृत्यैव च कर्माणि क्रियमाणानि सर्वशः | यः पश्यति तथात्मानमकर्तारं स पश्यति ||' *Krishna's* descent along with those of *Pandavas* and *Kauravas* responding to them when they perform their actions in life, rising to their individual spiritual regeneration becoming aware of their own spiritual *essence* in which the *divine intent* and *purpose* has designed them to be. One would be advised to be guided by *Sri Aurodindo* who said, '*All existence is a manifestation of God because He is the only existence and nothing can be except either a real figuring or else a figment of that one reality. Therefore every conscious being is in part or in some way a descent of the Infinite in to the apparent finiteness of name and form. But it is veiled manifestation and there is a gradation between the supreme being of the Divine and the consciousness shrouded partly or wholly by ignorance of self in the finite*'.

Therefore, even as those who read *Mahabharata* and *Bhagavat Purana* become enlightened to this truism that 'अवतारा असंख्यया हरेः सत्त्वनिर्धेद्विजाः | यथाविदासिनः कुल्याः सरसः स्युः सहस्रशः || ऋषयो मनवो देवा मनुपुत्रा महौजसः | कलाः सर्वे हरेरेव सप्रजापतायस्तथा || एते चांशकलः पुंससुः कृष्णस्तु भगवान्स्वयं |', they also cannot overlook the statements made by *Krishna* himself that 'तदिदं निश्चितं बुद्ध्या पूर्वैरपि महात्माभिः | दैवे च मानुषे चैव संयुक्तं लोककारणम्|| अहं हि तत्करिष्यामि परं पुरुषकारतः | दैवं तु न मया शक्य कर्म कार्तु कथंचन || . . यत्तु वाचा मया शक्यं कर्मणा वापि पाण्डव | करिष्ये तदहं पार्थ न तवाशंसे शमं परैः || or as declared, by *Drupad* that 'दिष्टस्य गन्थिरनिवर्तनीयः स्वकर्मणा विहितं नेह किंचित् | कृतं निमित्तं हि वरैकहेतोस्तदेवेदमुपपन्नं विधानम्ऽऽ . . दैवो हि वेत्तापरमं यदत्र |' or by *Duryodhana's* statement that he responds to life as prompted by his attributes and inclination, leaving everything to transpire as per will of the divine 'जानामि धर्मं न च मे प्रवृत्तिः जानाम्यधर्मं न च मे निवृत्तिः | केनापि देवेन हृदि स्थितेन यतहा नियुक्तो तथा करोमि ||'.

It becomes unreasonable to assume the divine descent took only in *Bharatavarsha* to the exclusion of all the other parts in creation. If *Brahman* is considered as the all-pervading *Vishnu* then he would be enveloping and maintaining the entire regions of creation. Therefore to limit the divine descents only to those mentioned in Indian context would be irrational. If one accepts the thesis that *Brahman* dwells in every thing that is created, it being more luminous in some than in others, then it would be reasonable to accept every element in creation, whether animate or inanimate, which is luminous more prominently would be justifiable to be accept as divine than the other elements. One is inclined to agree with *Shankara* when he says that there is no difference as regards *Brahman* or wisdom of *Brahman* between giants like *rigvedic* seer *Vamadeva* and the present day human beings lacking in strength of character 'न हि महावीर्येषु वामदेवादिषु हीनावीर्येषु वा वर्तमानिकेषु ब्रह्मणो विशषिस्तद्विज्ञानस्य वास्ति ||'. Wisdom is not denied to any one to whichever people, place, or period, provided that they have the desire and inclination for the wisdom of *Brahman*, by whatever name he be referred. That is the reason why in every parts of the world only some are considered divine and not all, only those in whom the divine attributes and inclinations are more evident than the others. This has been the case earlier as it has been recent times.

It was the author's objective not to project *Krishna* primarily as the god descended in human form to destroy the unrighteous and protect the righteous ones but to show how the human *form* in which the *divine consciousness* has become more luminous ' यः स नारायणो नाम देवदेवः सनातनः | तस्यांशो वासुदेवस्तु कर्म णोऽन्ते विवेश ह ||' against great odds to re-establish the cosmic law, ऋए and धर्म, in spite of the daunting factors which he had to encounter in doing so in an atmosphere where the inevitable course of *Time* as the *Kali yuga* was casting its long shadow on the minds of the people. Because the luminous essence becomes evident only when it becomes manifest in gross form 'अपरं यच्च मे रूपं प्रादुर्भावेषु दृष्यते |' *Krishna* was observed to perform multifarious activities in his life, prompting *Vyasa* when telling the tale of the internecine struggle between *Pandavas* and *Kauravas* used the role played by *Krishna* as the representative model for divine descent. The author has tried to tell the story, as far as possible, as documented by *Vyasa* as *Itihas*, and later transformed by later writers to make it a scripture, without allowing himself to be overwhelmed by the divinity of *Krishna* or be burdened by the righteous attributes of *Pandavas* or by the unrighteous attributes of the *Kauravas* or their associates. In *Shanti Parva* we find *Bhishma* telling *Yudhishthira* that *Krishna* is the supreme luminous lord and described variously as the all pervading *Purusha* and what *Vishnu* himself told *Narada* whatever one desires to know about the great all-pervading *Vishnu*, such one should approach men of wisdom, and as the sage having fully realized the supreme and eternal divine essence and has acknowledged it., knowing *Krishna* as verily the inconceivable supreme being and not a human being has advised significantly to surrender.

When seen from this perspective it becomes apparent for one to judge the *divine consciousness* operating even in the world which we experience even to day, where and how great ones in spite of tripping and succumb to small fragile temptations and how small persons some times display supreme robustness and remarkable display of righteousness. There is great interplay of the forces or darkness and of light in the manifest creation, neither on a larger scale or a platform can be treated as

righteous or unrighteous, all becoming the light and shade. Sri Aurobindo points out that '*All problems of existence are essentially problems of harmony. They arise form the perception of an unsolved discord and the instinct of an undiscovered agreement or unity. To rest content with an unsolved discord is possible for the practical and more animal part of man, but impossible for his fully awakened mind, and usually even his practical parts only escape from the general necessity of accepting a rough, utilitarian and un-illumined compromise. For essentially, all Nature seeks a harmony. Life and matter in their own sphere as much as mind in the arrangement of its perceptions*'. Therefore, what *Vyasa* seems to tell the readers is *Here is life, make your own choice*.

This is the purpose one should set for oneself; this is the purpose which the author has set for himself, intent for not only to be enraptured by the role played in the *Krishna-form* but also reveal in the *Krishna-Consciousness*, not failing in that attempt to becomes struck by the beauty of *Sanskrit* language, which becomes the instrument for *Vyasa* to bring out *Krishna's* multi-facet personality to the present generation as he did to the ancient *Yugas*, as simple child prodigy as well as an adolescent, wise in wisdom far beyond his age, a devoted son, a consummate lover, a mature conciliator, a shrewd diplomat, a scheming practitioner in *real-politic*, a man of the worlds speaking words transcending empirical event, a consummate philosopher wise in intellect, a disciplined ruler and a compassionate judge, as particular as he is universal, palpable in the present moment and yet perceptible beyond the constraints of *Time*, as earthly as he is sensual, as temporal as he is spiritual, supreme *Person*, god and *Brahman*.

The author has mainly relied on *Mahabharata* published by *Gita Press, Gorakhpur*, though the one edited by Dr. V. S. *Sukhtankar* has been generally accepted as exhaustive and reliable. The *Gita Press* edition contains many verses, prevalent in South India, which do not find place in *Sukhtankar's* edition, and the *Author* has included many of these quotations for clarifications and making people aware of the beauty and elegance of *Sanskrit* language. *Gita Press* edition is available at low cost with translation in Hindi, making it easy for one to possess more further study, containing many more instructive and illuminating passages.

A disclaimer

The Author does not claim any higher knowledge than those possessed by the readers nor that has he read and understood the whole of *Mahabharata* and other scriptures. If one accepts the central premise that *the Prime Existence* exists in every element in creation, then he is not different from any on e who reads this book. *Shankara* says that in realization of *Brahman* there is no difference between great ones like *Vamadeva* and weaklings like human beings - 'न हि महावीर्येषु वामदेवादिषु हीनवीर्येषु वा वानमानिकेषु मनुष्येषु ब्रह्मणो विशेषास्तद्विज्ञानस्य वा अस्ति ||'. If communication does not become clear in one as in the other, then it is because one has kept his mind a little more sensitive and receptive than the other.

वेद, *Wisdom* is अपौरुषेय impersonal, नित्य, eternal अनादि and अनन्त - neither with any beginning nor with any end. What has one brought along with him and what will he be taking with him. That is important. *Wisdom* belongs to all, whether rich of poor, big or small, male of female, of one race or the other, whether Hindu, Buddhist, Hebrew, Christian or Muslim, it belongs to every one. The *puranas, sutras, darshanas, bhashyas* constitute *Knowledge* ज्ञान individual commentaries and clarifications; therefore become intermediate foundations for seekers of *Wisdom*. They are the windows which allow one to see the vast space, the *Wisdom*. Though space is vaster than that what the window has allowed one to see one sees space as much as each window frame allows one to see or would reveal. When one is dwelling and enclosed in human body, his vision becomes enclosed and restricted to the extent of the receptivity which he has, no more nor less.

No one can claim its ownership. *Upanishads* say 'ॐ ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किंच जगत्यां जगत. तेन त्यक्तेन भुंजीथा., मा

गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम्|| कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि जिजिविषेच्छतं समाः | एवं त्वयि नान्यथेतोऽस्ति न कर्मलिप्यते नरे ||' *Wisdom* belongs neither to one nor to another, it belongs to the Lord, therefore, let us all revel in the *Wisdom*, whatever is ordained for each one, never questioning from where they have sourced the *Wisdom.* For it belongs to no one in particular but to every one who sources it from the great Lord. The *Wisdom* communicated by seers is never claimed by them as belonging to them alone but as belonging to all. Every one sources from *Wisdom* as much as one has the ability to do, no more nor less. There is nothing spoke which was not spoken earlier. Every sound is reproduction of the *Eternal Sound*, ॐ. Therefore, when one speaks the other one finds the resonance of the intelligence and imagination, words and vocabulary of the Wisdom spoken earlier by others. It is better to understand and absorb *Wisdom* than dispute about from where it has been sourced as *Knowledge* for that alone will ever be of worth for eternity.

The author has peeped through every window that is available and sourced from every stream that is available, being fully conscious and aware that the space that is vaster than what the window has allowed him to see and the stream is the same from where every one has sourced. He has tried to seek the vast space outside the dwelling place and sourced from every stream, therefore, has not attached himself to any particular window frame or to any particular stream but has come out in the open to have vision of the *Wisdom* which is vast, comprehensive and all-pervading. The hunger for *Knowledge* and the *Knowledge* gathered is entirely due to *divine dispensation* which has enabled the author to study, sort out, and analyze the material sourced. The book has been the fruit of his labour of love and dedication or else all *Knowledge* gathered by him would have passed over as waters of the stream that pass over the insensitive and unreceptive stones and bounders.

Therefore in this book there is nothing spoken that was not spoken earlier, nothing written that was not written earlier. But assuming that many may not have listened all that was spoken earlier, or read all that was written earlier, the author has attempted to bring some of the things spoken earlier and not listened by them or the things written earlier and not yet read by them. But this book does not contain all that is or could even be. Being human, there is every possibility and probability of error in selecting, in listening, in receptivity, in reflection and meditation. Since *Wisdom* is same and similar, nothing fresh or new has been spoken or added, there being nothing fresh or new to be spoken or added which were not already not seen or spoken earlier. Author's attempt may not be on the right course, yet it is useful to know the right from the wrong *Path.* The effort has not been not to find out which of the seer or the sage, the historian or the recorder tells truth about *Krishna* but how the seer or the sage, the historian or the recorder has seen *Krishna* and experienced his multi-dimensional personality. Therefore, there are bound to be mistakes in understanding, in interpretation, in response, in recording as well as reproducing reference, in language, grammar as well as in syntax. All these errors or shortcomings are entirely those of the Author. Therefore, one need not reject what is recorded herein because of the many mistakes noticed from place to place.

The attempt has not been lateral but progressively variable, the vision becoming enlarged and spacious enveloping increasingly more and more and reaching out deeper and deeper, not knowing whether one is on the right *Path* but feeling richer by the moment. If that purpose is served, then the purpose of writing this book will be fulfilled. In that satisfaction the *upanishads* say one becomes vast as space, transparent like water, that is the world of *Brahman*, the supreme goal, the supreme treasure, the supreme world, the supreme bliss. On particle of this bliss the rest of the creatures nurture 'सलिल एको द्रष्टाद्वैतो भवति एष ब्रह्मलोकः . . एषास्य परमा गतिः, एषास्य परमा संपत्, एषोऽस्य परमो लोकः, एषोऽस्य परम आनन्दः, एतस्यैवानन्दस्यान्यानि भूतानि मात्रामुपजीवन्ति ||'.

The Background

When one speaks of History, one is conventionally inclined to begin with the evolution of the human species and not with any others aspects of creative effulgence. History was perceived to begin in India with the sensitive *vedic* seers perceiving that in the beginning there was neither non-*Existence* nor *Existence*; there was neither air nor the sky beyond, wondering by what was it then covered nor wondering where and what was its shelter? Was water there, deep and fathomless? *Death* did not exist nor was *Then* the night; of the day was there no sign. Without breathing, alone with *self-impulse* was *That One*, other than that, there was nothing else 'नासदासीन्नो सदासीत्तदानीं नासीदजो नो व्योमा परो यत्| किमावरीवः कुह कस्य शर्म न्नम्भः किमासीद्गहनम्गभीरम्|| न मृत्युरासीदमृतं न तर्हि न रात्र्या अह्न आसीत् प्रकेतः | आनीदवातं स्वधया तदेकं तस्माद्धान्यत्र परः किं चनास ||'. Then they experienced in their sensitive mind that there arose the golden-wombed *form*, as the sole custodian of all the creatures that were formed, who upheld the space and world within self perceiving him as the self and energy, whom the universe reveres and in whom the gods enter, whose reflection is immortality as well as death, who through movement and staying steady, become the sole supreme Lord of the worlds, the supreme among men and animals, 'हिरण्यगर्भः समवर्तताग्रे भूतस्य जातः पतिरेक आसीत्| स दाधार पृथिवीं द्यामुतेमां कस्मै देवाय हविषा विधेम ||...यः प्राणतो निमिषतो महित्वैक इद्राजा जगतो बभूव | य ईशे अस्य द्विपदश्चतुष्पदः कस्मै देवाय हविषा विधेम ||.

Pancharatra, which *Madhva* describes as मूलवेद, described the stage prior to manifestation as of *That One*, 'अनद्यवन्तं परं ब्रह्म यत्तदहरणद्वयं अनाम अरूप असंभेद्य अमवंगममनमहोचरं सर्वशक्ति ममाख्यं मद्गुण्यमजरं ध्रुवम्||' and 'आनन्दलक्षणं ब्रह्म सर्वहेयविवकृतं स्वसंवेद्यमनौपमन्यं परध्काश्टा परागतिः सर्वेकयविनिर्मुक्तं सर्वसंश्रयं प्रभुः ||'. Visualizing it with emphasis on anthropological identification, *That One* was designated as *Narayana-Vishna-Vasudeva*, abiding in tranquil state - 'विश्राममयः' endowed with six-fold signs and resplendent energy - 'मदागुण्यविग्रह देव नदृशा च श्रीया युक्तात्मा', with श्री as his supreme energy resplendent like gold 'नस्य या परमा शक्तिर्ज्योत्स्ना हिमदीधाने', or abiding as fragrance in the flower 'श्वसनवेद्यं नु नदविद्धि गन्धं पुष्पादिगं नथा'. The state was indistinct and inconceivable as windless sky - 'असंमरम्वररूपम्', of non-existent form 'शून्यम्वरूपिणि', non-turbulent 'समित्यरूपा'. The creative cycle begins when श्री opens her eyes suggesting the bursting out *Narayana's Will to create*, analogous to the *vedic self-impulse* (स्वधया), and creative activity starts with *Sankarshana* analogous to the *vedic Hiranyagarbha*, bursting with a flash of turbulence and resplendence like a flash of lightening with luminous light 'मदीप्तं क्षोभयित्वा नु विद्युत्सवेन नेजसा पकाशरूपी भगवानच्युतश्चमूर्जाद्राजा' to manifest with limited independence, 'कस्मचित्स्वतन्त्रनया', appearing as a dark spot 'निलकलक', concentric state showing faint traces of the universe of *becoming*, with सत्, रजस् and नमस् emanating with attribute similar in *essence* and yet distinct in *form* 'भिन्नकात्मलक्षणेनम्'. United they give the rise to intellect बुद्धिनत्व which in turn reflects in triple forms as प्रकाशात्मा, विकात्मा and भूतात्मा. From प्रकाशात्मा five sensory organs and mind emanate, from विकात्मा the five operative sensory organs and from भूतात्मा the five तन्मात्राs emanate.

Modern science sees creation of the universe in similar striking terminology when the universe, as we know today, was without stars, no galaxies and no light, just a black brew of primordial gases immersed in a sea of invisible matter. Then few thousand years after the blinding flash of the *big bang*, the universe plunges in darkness that lasts for almost a half billion years, causing some thing to happen that leads to the creation not just of stars and galaxies but also of planets, people, fish, lizards and animals. Astronomers know not only about our own galaxy, the *Milky Way* but also other galaxies, collections of stars, gas and dust bound together by gravity.

This description of universe echoes to a large extent what symbolically was expressed in *vedic* and *Pancharatra* scriptures and graphically described in *Lalita Sahasranama Stotra*, which speaks of the time when *Sri Lalita, the Brhaman* of the *upanishads*, ruling over crores of galaxies or worlds each

with their own distinct presiding deities *Brahma-NarayanaRudras* each with their respective female energies - *Brahmani, Laksmi* and *Gauri* - summons to attend her court, sitting according to their status and importance to chant her thousand names.

Indian *puranic* tradition conceives multiple creations with as many as seven *Manvantaras* under *Savayambhuva. Svaraochisha, Uttama, Tamasa, Raivata, Chakshu* and the last and the present one presided by *Vaivasvata Manu,* each having their own separate groups of *seven Rishis, gods, Indras*, and attendants like *gandharvas* according to their *Karmas.* Each *Manvantara* lasts for four cyclical *yugas - Satya, Treta, Dvapara* and *Kali,* each of them with definite allocated number of years, not so much to suggest passage of *Time* but the period during which धर्म, righteousness is pro-active and the influence of unrighteousness is inactive. *Bhagavata Purana* says that when *Brahman* saw that with his entire महत्तत्व and rest of the powers could not move the creation to its purpose, since there was no harmony in between them, he used his powerful divine potency काल - *Time* to enter into them to give momentum to the creative process. Therefore, a total number of 12,000 celestial years or 43,20,000 human years are provided for the present *Manvantara* or *Manu's* cycle with presence of the *divine essence* during the entire course, *Satya yuga* having 4,800 celestial years (17,28,000 human years), *Treta yuga* having 3600 celestial years (12,96,000 human years), *Dvapara yuga* having 2,400 celestial years (8,64,000 human years) and finally Kali *yuga*, where righteousness is low having only 1200 celestial years (4,32,000 human years).

Atharvavedic seers, unlike the others who traversed to the East fighting their way through the *Iranian* plains and flowering on the banks of *Sapta-Sindhavas*, had visited the regions of *Mesopotamia-Babylonia* and *Iran* and observed that the Earth is inhabited by people speaking varied language and following religious rites of the regions where they lived 'जनं बिभ्रति बहुधा विवाचसं नानाधर्माणं पृथिवी यथौकसम्|' desired that it may enrich him with thousands of streams like a *milch-cow* that never fails 'सहस्रधारा द्रविणस्य मे दुहां ध्रुवेव धेनुर् अनपस्फुरन्ती ||', welcoming the spiritual wisdom to flow from all quarters 'आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः |'. They further perceived that the earth is upheld by सत्य, *the supreme Prime existence*, ऋत, the stern *Cosmic law*, दीक्षा-तपो initiation and austerity, and ब्रह्म-यज्ञ, sacrifice performed with *Wisdom*, 'सत्यं बृहदृतमुग्रं दीक्षा तपो ब्रह्म यज्ञः पृथिवीं धारयन्ति |' and chose to walk again that auspicious *Path* like the Sun and Moon, associating again with the liberal, kind and wise who had earlier traversed towards East 'स्वस्ति पन्थामनु चरेम सूर्याचन्द्रमसाविव | पुनर् ददताऽघ्नता जानता सं गच्छामि ||'.

The three principles सत्य, ऋत and धर्म, have been conceived as the deciding factors that uphold the creation and evolution, सत्य, *the supreme Prime Existence* being Witness, energizing and supervising agency to maintain ऋत, the stern *Cosmic law* based on धर्म the perennial principle which uphold the world order. Since manifestation is complete with divine essence being in every that has been manifest 'ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत्|', it having been declared further 'अहं सर्वस्य प्रभवो मत्तः सर्वं प्रवर्तते |' and that 'ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः | मनःषष्ठानीन्द्रियाणि प्रकृतिस्थानि कर्षति ||' the organs and the actions performed by them become influenced by *Kali*, than by those that are recommended by the scriptures and विवेक, sense of discrimination. There was neither any *Time* nor any moment when the state of being was all sugar and honey and when there was no evil but only righteousness and sense of discrimination existed. Therefore, each *Manavantara* was conceived to begin with *Satya yuga* as comprehensive whole, endowed by धर्म standing on all its four limbs (*the supreme Prime existence*, the stern *Cosmic law*, initiation and austerity, and sacrifice performed with *Wisdom*), with gradual decrease in धर्म over the *yugas* in त्रेतायुग, धर्म exists on three limbs (*the supreme Prime existence*, the stern *Cosmic law*, and initiation and austerity), in द्वापर युग, धर्म exists on two limbs (*the supreme Prime existence*, the stern *Cosmic law*) and finally in कलि युग, धर्म would exist only on one limb (सत्य, *the supreme Prime existence*), the transition period of each subsequent *yuga* casts its shadow on the previous *yuga.* Contrary to this passage of human evolution, seen by other civilization of the day, the spiritual thoughts, concepts and

values which *Aryas* nurtured seems to have been more influenced by the raw natural ambience than by the material and temporal world and rose to the subtle and spiritual heights.

Unlike these strange nomadic *Aryas* who came down from the northern slopes, those who traveled from the *Egyptian* deserts to the regions of the *Sindhu* and *Sarsavati* river civilizations, passing through the early civilizations that flowered on the river banks of *Nile, Jordan, Euphrates* and Iran had an impressive urban civilizations evolving their own social and cultural values on material and temporal life, with the spiritual thoughts affecting them on the fringe or affecting them as their emotional level rather than intellectual level. In the absence of intellectual and spiritual base and increasing weight of the material and temporal expression, the *Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Babylonian* were reduced to dust, while the *Hebrew* civilization survived on the slender thread of *Abrahama's* vision of the *God* and its resurrection by *Moses* later. It became revived and strengthened only when *Jesus Nazarath* came on the scene.

In historical perspective though these civilizations though dynamic and vibrant on temporal level seemed to lack the dynamism and vibrancy of the seers of the *wisdom* of the *vedic* scriptures on the spiritual level, *Sarasvati symbolizing* the quintessence of धर्म pure and unsullied, symbolizing the earlier stages of their journey on the banks of rivers *Oxus* and *Hariquiti* to the culmination of their spiritual effervescence on the banks of the three rivers *Sarasvati*, *Drishadvaati* and *Apayu* finally the seat of divine effulgence being conceived around *Brahmavarta.*

During the early period of such *Arya* settlement *Varnasharama* as later espoused by *Krishna* or corrupted thereafter did not exist. Among *Aryas* only two classes existed, one being the composers of hymns who as the enlightened seers saw *wisdom* in their supra-sensory vision and the other being that of the warriors who preserved the *vedic* wisdom and the cultural heritage. These functions were not exclusive, seers taking part in warlike operation as *Vashishtha* or a *Vishvamitra* did or warriors like *Prithu, Manu Vaivasvata, Mandhatri Yauvanashva, Sudas, Divodas* taking part in composing hymns. In later times when the relations with the non-*Arya* settlers in the *Sindhu* valley and on the banks of river *Sarasvati,* became cordial we find non-*Arya* s also composing hymns.

In manifested world a fraction of *the Prime Existence,* the *Brahman* exists with five senses and mind as the sixth - 'ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः | मनःषष्ठानीन्द्रियाणि प्रकृतिस्थानि कर्षति ||', undivided in creatures as if divided as the One to be known, the creator, the supporter and the devourer of the creatures 'अविभक्तं च भूतेषु विभक्तमिव च स्थितम्| भूतभर्तृ च तज्ज्ञेयं ग्रसिष्णु प्रभविष्णु च ||' as mentioned in *Isha Upanishad* 'ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किंच जगत्यां जगत्'. But of the four cyclical *yugas - Satya, Treta, Dvapara* and *Kali,* only in सत्य युग its presence is experienced as one comprehensive with both the forces of *Light* and those of *Darkness* existing as the progeny of the *Prajapati*, vying for supremacy with each other, with increasing encounters in which asuras, *dasa and danavas* considering them as अवैदिक - against the *vedic* wisdom and अयज्व the non-sacrifice performers come to be destroyed by the forces of *Light*. It was perhaps in the transitional period when *Satya yuga* was to end and *Treta yuga,* that there was not only a great emigration of *Aryas* eastwards with the disappearance of river *Sarasvati* but also a great infusion within the *Arya*-fold of not only the non-*Arya* people but also of their religious beliefs and faiths, and cultural and social practices which was considered as one of starting point of decline of *vedic* wisdom and in righteousness. Increasing interaction with non-*Aryas* like the *Pani* traders and the *dasa-danavas* artisans labourers there was large scale infusion within social, cultural and spiritual spheres of the *Aryas* creating a need for classifying classes which came out as *Vaishyas* and *Shudras*.

Even among the earlier two, *Brahmin* and *Kshatriya* classes, there arose soon a conflict with *Kshatriya* class becoming aggressive and claiming share in the functions which are primarily intellectual. In some of the *Upanishads,* we find *Pravahana Jaivali,* a *Kshatriya* replying *Brahmin Svetaketu Arauneya* that 'नत्त्वं गौतम मापराधास्तव च पितामहा यथा | इयं विद्येतः पूर्वं न कस्मिंश्चन ब्राह्मण उवास | तां त्वहं तुभ्यं वक्ष्यामि |..' These excessive claim to divine wisdom on the basis of their temporal eminence angered *Brahmin*

Parashurama Bhargava considered a divine descent to a great massacre of many arrogant *Kshatriyas. Satya yuga* ended with such extermination but at the instance of a *Brahmin Kashyapa, Parashurama* was banished to the end of *Aryavarta* and to settle at in *Shuparaka* to safeguard the *Aryavarta* from being ruled by non-*Aryas*. *Satya yuga* came to the end the death of King *Sagar* of *Ikshavaku* dynasty.

In *Treta yuga* one finds *Ikshavaku* dynasty ruling in *Ayodhya*, being the place where the cultural centre of the *Aryas* seems to have shifted. *Bhagiratha, Ambarisha, Dilip, Raghu, Aja* at the helm with *Dasharathi Rama* being hailed as मर्यादा-पुरुषोत्तम, ideal person ruling with righteousness and indicating that the divine intent and purpose allotted to him was filled with the destruction of the arrogant *Kshatriyas* and it is now his task to establish morality and ethical correctness and propriety. The transitional period ends with spread over of *Arya* kings ruling the entire area from the *Bihar* in the north to the *Gujarat* in the west. During this period there was greater cohesion between the *Arya* and non-*Aryas* there being a confluence of social, cultural and religious beliefs and faiths of both *Aryas* and non-*Arya* people. Therefore, it is said that in त्रेतायुग, धर्म existed only on three limbs (*the supreme Prime existence*, the stern *Cosmic law*, and initiation and austerity).

In *Dvapara* era there was greater infusion of non-*Arya* elements, and in spite of *Rama's* efforts to curb their influence in society, righteousness, morality and ethical standards increased in subsequent *Dvapara yuga. Pauravas* were dominant in this *yuga*, re-establishing their hold in the area around *Sarasvati* and *Yamuna* with a later descendent *Kuru* performing a great sacrifice at *Prayag*, with clear divisions as *Kurukshetra* (cultivated land) and *Kurujangala*, (the uncultivated land). *Prateep, Shantanu, Bhishma, Dhritarashtra* and *Pandu* were the other prominent persons in this line. In the concluding period of *Dvapara yuga* one sees the internecine conflict between the *Kauravas* and *Pandavas*, culminating in the war on the battlefields of *Kurukshetra*.

In *Dvapara yuga Krishna* played an important part as पूर्णावतार not only in the rivalry between *Pandavas* and *Kauravas* but also a *divine descent* come to re-establish righteousness and destroy unrighteous forces of *Darkness*. He proposed re-introduction of the principles of *Varnashrma*, the classification of the society according to गुण and कर्म. But his efforts did not seem to have succeeded, having to behave as a human and performing actions as a human being would do, leaving a simple and righteous man like *Balarama* question his deeds and he having to point out the lengthening shadow of *Kali* falling on the society. When *Uttanka Bhargava* proceeded to curse him for having failed to act like *divine person*, fulfilling the *divine intent* and *purpose*, he was obliged to explain that he had to behave like a human being in his human *form*. *Krishna's* performance of his actions with pronounced human bias and inclination in spite of the conscious awareness of his *divine essence* created confusion and mystified even the best of the intellectuals like *Bhishma, Drona, Asahvattma, Sanjaya* and *Uttanka* and even as it did his own brother and part manifestation of the same *divine essence*, let alone ignorantof his divine essence by persons like *Kamsa, Jarasandha, Kalayavana, Paundraka, Shrugala, Shishupala, Karna* who were born obscure to any divine effulgence.

The obscurity of धर्म as the perennial principles made *Krishna* remind *Arjuna* the ancient *Varnashrma*, classification according to attributes and work performed which he had established earlier and which had become obscured and disintegrated to a class system based on the family in which one was born. Therefore, in द्वापर युग, धर्म existed only on two limbs, requiring *Krishna* having to descend again, establishing himself in *Prakriti* to re-establish धर्म. His role being seen as *divine* intervention in the struggle between the forces of *Light* and those of *Darkness*, destroying the unrighteous ones and establishing the righteousness back in the world. His influence on the people and the society, therefore, was so ingrained that it came to be believed that *Kali yuga* could not make its presence felt so long as he was alive, casting its shadow on the society and the thoughts and actions of the people.

In *Kali yuga* the *Varnashrma*, became furthered disintegrated from classification according to attributes and work performed to a class system based on the family in which one was born. Therefore,

in द्वापर युग, धर्म exists on two limbs (*the supreme Prime existence*, the stern *Cosmic law*). Therefore, from *Parikshit* to *Janamaejaya* the *Kuru* family started its downward course. The control of the state increasingly began passing over to *Vaishyas*, though *Kshatriyas* continued to be the titular rulers. The deterioration of *Varnasharama* was occasioned by excessive greed for wealth and possessions among *Brahmins* lead them to take up works which were preserved for *Vaishyas*, at the same time not ready to loose their right to priestly duties and control as the repository of *vedic* wisdom. What was seen as revolt against *Vedic* scripture was not so much against *Vedas* as aggregated *Wisdom* collated by Vyasa as it was against *brahmannical* interpretation of what those *vedic* scriptures represent. *Buddha* did not seem to object so much of the wisdom of the *Vedas* and *Upanishads*, which he is seen to accept in his teachings as he did object their keeping wisdom exclusively preserved for one class of people to the exclusion of other classes.

Kshatriyas who increasingly depended on *brahmannical* spiritual support and *Brahmins* who depended on the support of the *Kshatriya* lost their intrinsic power with the increasing diversion of the *Brahmin-Kshatriyas* from their spiritual foundations craving for material possessions. Finally when the last *Kshatriya* king was defeated by *Chandragupta Maurya*, the power may be said to have shifted from the hands of *Brahimn-Kshatriya* duo to the hands of *Vaishyas* as financiers and *Shudras* as the warrior. *Kali yuga* was come in fullness of its forceful presence.

The though one has been aware and conscious of *Kali's* presence in and out of centuries and millenniums, the exact date of his arrival is yet shrouded in mystery, the faithful trying to take it back in time and the skeptics having their imaginative conclusions based on what they refer often as archeological evidence. While some rest their case on mythological scriptures and *puranas* which highly imaginative poetical presentations for capturing the imagination of the faithful, while yet others base their conclusion on astrological calculations which some base on astronomical passages in *Mahabharata*, which are inconsistent and that no certain chronological conclusion can be drawn there from or at best of doubtful authenticity many having been added not belonging to the original *Mahabharata* of *Vyasa* but to its later editions, and therefore admitted by all that some of them at least are fanciful and absurd.

The *Aihole* inscription of *Pulakeshin* II of western *Chalukya* dynasty (634 AD) has influenced generally many more than by other evidences. The inscription reads 'त्रिंशत्सु त्रिसहस्रेषु भारतादाहवादितः | सप्ताब्दशतयुक्तेषु गतेष्वब्देषु पञ्चसु | पञ्चाशत्सु कलौकाले षट्सु पञ्चशतासु च | समासु समतीतासु शकानामपि भूभुजाम्||'. The inscription is dated *Shalivahana Shaka* beginning with 78 AD. - 'त्रिंशत्सु त्रिसहस्रेषु भारतादाहवादितः | सप्ताब्दशतयुक्तेषु गतेष्वब्देषु पञ्चसु | पञ्चाशत्सु कलौकाले षट्सु पञ्चशतासु च | समासु समतीतासु शकानामपि भूभुजाम्||'. The inscription is dated *Shalivahana Shaka* beginning with 78 AD i.e. 634 AD. Therefore, त्रिंशत्सु 30 + त्रिसहस्रेषु 3000 + सप्ताब्दशतयुक्तेषु 700 + गतेष्वब्देषु पञ्चसु 5 = 30+3000+700+5 = 3735. पञ्चाशत्सु 50 + षट्सु 6 + पञ्चशतासु 500 = 556 after *Shaka* era, i.e. 3735 634 = 3101. Accepting this date on literal reading of the inscription would lead one o fix the starting point of *Kali* Age as taken 3101 B.C., pushing the dates of earlier *yugas* still back, which does not appear when compared with visible archeological findings in *Sindhu* and *Sarsvati* river civilizations or with similarly placed civilizations in other parts of the world.

Another method used by many was to base their conclusions of the reference in *Bhagavat Purana* which says that *Kali yuga* entered the moment *Krishna* departed to his supreme abiding place 'यदा मुकुन्दो भगवानिमां महीं जहौ स्वतन्वा श्रवणीयसत्कथः | तदाहरेवाप्रतिबुद्धचेतसाम् अभद्रहेतुः कलिरन्ववर्तत ||' and 'विष्णोर्भगवतो भानुः कृष्णाख्योऽसौ दिवं गतः | तदाविशत्कलिर्लोकं पापे यद्रमते जनः ||'. *Bhagavat Purana*) and the statements from puranas like 'यावत् परीक्षितो जन्म यावन्नन्दाभिषेचनम्| एतद्वर्ष सहस्रं तु ज्ञेयं पंचशतोत्तरम्||' or यावज्जन्मपरीक्षितः | एवं वर्षसहस्रं तु ज्ञेयं पञ्चाशदुत्तरम्||' which fix the date of *Parikshit's* birth, which coincides with the closing period of *Kurukshetra* war and accession of *Mahapadma Nanda* with other variants like 'ज्ञेयं पंचदशोत्तरम्' (1015 years), 'ज्ञेयं पञ्चाशदुत्तरम्(1050 years) and 'ज्ञेयं पञ्चशतोत्तरम्' (1500 years). *Mahapadma Nanda* ascension having been placed in 382 B.C. on historical evidence, the date of *Parikshit's* birth comes out at the close of the *Mahabharata* war, between 1882 and 1397 years B.C.

which also brings the commencement around that year rather than 3101 B.C. as are deduced from the *Aihole* inscription.

The date 3101 B.C. appears more reasonable since like the flood from which *Vaivasvata Manu* as the instrument for the new creative cycle begins similar floods are mentioned among the *Babylonians*, *Hebrews* and *Hindus*, *Wooley* in his book *Ur of the Chaldees*, suggesting for the *Babylonian* flood the date 3101. This date reasonably places the period when *Aryas* were yet nomadic tribes beyond Indian borders, much earlier than their entry in India via Iranian plains, retaining as memory of the racial groups referred by the *Athrvavedic* seer, retained and appropriated in their own cultures as a great historical event.

All major civilizations are credited to have prospered between 3500 and 3000 B.C., each having possibly contacts with one or the other civilization, exchanging racial, social, cultural influences together with many legends, religious beliefs and philosophical thoughts. The origin of the human race is believed to be in the dark continent of *Africa* and spreading northwards though Egypt is said to have spread over the whole world having many common features and legends between them. One of the legends dwelt on the great flood of epic dimension which is said to have destroyed the old world and created a new one. *Tanzanians* record that when the great flood came about, two persons climbed in a ship with lots of seeds and animals, till a new life would start when the flood subsides. According to *Babylonians*, God came to *Utnapishtim* and warned him of the flood, asking him to construct a ship from the materials of his home and to take a male and female of every animal along with his wife and family. When the flood started he positioned the ship on the top of Mt. *Nisir* and he left the ship when the flood subsided after six days. According to *Chaldean* legend, God warned *Xisuthrus* of the flood and to build a ship and take his family, friends and each male and female of animals to get down from the ship on earth only when the flood recedes. In India, a similar legend is attributed to Manu whom God comes in the form of a fish and guides him to Mt. *Meru* where he ties the ship till the flood waters recede.

History in India begins with the *Aryas* and not with other racial groups though they were already in existence prior to the arrival of *Aryas* in India and settling on the banks of *the Sapt-Sindhavas*. The *Sindhu* and *Sarasvati* river civilization of the non-*Aryas* which flourished prior to their arrival prospering in close contacts with other like civilizations on the west like *Egyptian*, *Mesopotamian*, *Sumerian*, and *Iranian* did not find mention in the *vedic* scriptures even though they came to be mentioned with awe and respect and more as symbols of *un-Arya* beliefs and faiths in adjacent regions more as props to build their own mystical philosophy than as some people of substance.

History has always been dominated by the winners and not by losers. *India* was no exception. Therefore, the dominant narration of history is found in *Rigveda*, where historical events came to be recorded to represent and explain religious and spiritual truths. *Rigveda* became the testament and testimony of the victory of the *Aryas* as the enlightened forces of *Light* over *dasa*, *dasyu* and *asuras* who were pushed to be the unenlightened forces of *Darkness* and the land became *Bharatavarsha*, the field where *Bharatas* recorded their victories. Later when *Puranas* came to be composed as a process of elucidation of the mysticism of the *vedic* scriptures, these symbols acquired anthropomorphic presence. Generations reveled under the glow of the success of the *Aryas* over them. In India history from then onwards became predominantly the history of *Aryas*.

Dvaipayana Krishna was an exceptionally brilliant product of *Dvapara* era, born to *Satyavati* and sage *Parashara*, who was *Vashisthta's* grandson. It was he who had observed that the innumerable hymns composed in earlier *yugas* by different people, in different places and in different speech-forms have in oral transmission from generations to generations, become obscure, people having become short lived, deficient in energy and dull witted due to the operation of *Time* - 'क्षीणायुषः क्षीनसत्त्वान्दुर्मेधान्वीक्ष्य कालतः |'. It was he who gathered, collected, collated, consolidated, and divided few the important and representative hymns from the mass of hymns seen by different seers in different generations,

expressed in different पाकृतिक speech-forms among *Arya* tribes in different generations and transformed them from the earlier various *Prakrit forms* to the standardized *Sanskrit form*, which had by then became the accepted form for religious and cultural expression. Since then *Dvaipayana Krishna* came to be designated as *Vyasa* 'विव्यास वेदान्यस्मात् व्यास इति स्मृतः'. *Vyasa* is not the name of a person but the designation of one who collects, collates consolidates and divides. Like *Dvaipayana Krishna* who collated and distributed *vedic* scriptures, they were many others who were designated as *Vyasa*, having collected, collated, consolidated, and divided scriptural material spread over people, places and periods. *Kurma Purana* and *Vishnu Purana* (III.3) gives a list of 28 *Vyasas* 'वेदव्यासा व्यनीता ये अष्टाविंमति सत्तम | चतुर्द्ध कृतो वेदा पुनः पुन ||, beginning with स्वयंभुव *Brahma, Prajapati, Ushana, Brihaspati, Savita, Indra, Vasishtha, Sarasvata, Tridharma, Trivrusha, Shatateja, Dharma, Suchakshu, Traiaruni, Dhananjaya, Kritanjaya, Ritunjaya, Bharadvaja, Gautama, achashraya, Shumanyaya, Trinabindu, Valmiki, Shakti, Parashara, Jatukara* and *Krishna Dvaipayana.*

It was *Krishna Dvaipayana* who was witness to the great internecine struggle between *Pandavas* and *Kauaravas*, not only as a respected member of the family but also as a great sage of the time having drawn spiritual energy from *Vashishtha* venerable seer of many *vedic* hymns. Therefore, there was no better person than him to record the events and he may have recorded as *Jaya* immediately after the extermination of *Kauravas.* In *Mahabharata* itself we are informed that *Vyasa* tool three years to record the narration - 'त्रिभिर्वर्षैः सदोत्थायी कृष्णद्वैपायनो मुनिः | महाभारतमाख्यानं कृतवानिदमुत्तमम्||'. Though it is generally accepted that *Dvaipayana Krishna*, was not the sole author of *Mahabharata* in its present form but is an undoubted compilation of many people, whose contribution came to be included together to de designated as the contributions of *Vyasa.*

Even as *Rigvedic* seers used temporal events and communicative language for expressing their spiritual experiences in the form of hymns even so *Vyasa* used the temporal events relating to the internecine struggle between *Pandavas* and *Kauravas* as the struggle between the forces of *Light* and forces of *Darkness*, with the *Krishna* playing the enlightened role as the witness, initiator and judge for fulfilling the *divine intent* and *purpose* therein. In doing so he used the common temporal terminology to expound great spiritual truths making temporal events as the foundation to revel great spiritual and mystical truths which he had found in *vedic* scriptures and intellectual dissertations of the *upanishdic intellectuals.* The *Mahabharata* is, therefore, comes out as a combination of simple, straightforward narration of the events which led to the great war between *Pandavas* and *Kauravas*, with the part played by *Krishna* prior, during and later brought about, with his divinity suggested but not overtly emphasized.

The story of *Mahabharta* deals with events which transpired during the internecine struggle between *Kauravas* and *Pandavas* in which *Krishna* played an important part, and to which *Dvaipayana Krishna* was witness- '..विस्तरं कुरुवंशस्य गान्धार्या धर्मशीलताम्|| क्षत्तुः प्रज्ञा धृतिं कुन्त्याः सम्यग्द्वैपायनोऽब्रवीत्| वासुदेवस्य माहात्म्य पाण्डवानां च सत्यताम्|| दुर्वृत्तं धार्तराष्ट्राणामुक्तवान्भगवानृषिः |'. War generally casts magic spell on human imagination and made overwhelming influence on a large segment of the then culturally, socially and politically vibrant area of India concerned with larger problems which people faced even as *Dvapara yuga* ends and *Kali yuga* begins, casting its pernicious shadow on people making *Vyasa* to record in an engrossing and imaginative narrative. *Krishna* makes pointed reference to these times pointing out to *Balarama* - 'प्राप्तं कलियुगं विद्धि प्रतिज्ञां पाण्डवस्य च | अनृण्यं यातु वैरस्य प्रतिज्ञायाश्च पाण्डवाः ||.

Considering that only in the backdrop of the struggle between the forces of *Light* and the forces of *Darkness*, the luminous resplendence of *Krishna* becomes visible, as ज्योतिषां ज्योतिः *Vyasa* handled with restraint and reservations, the relationship of *Pandavas* with *Krishna-saga*. The temporal balanced with miraculous, with definite penchant to keep his divine personality in the back-ground than make it aggressively assertive. What we see in *Mahabharata* is *Krishna* who is human, wise, discerning, and often assertive and drawing attention in a compelling manner, a great statesman, strong

and powerful political person in times of peace and in times of war, a practitioner of temporal arts as well spiritual philosopher. But never transgressing the social and political limits, moral and ethical values not prevalent during the period when he lived. The original historical narrative is said to contain the 8,800 hymns designated *Jaya. Vyasa* is said to have requested Lord *Ganesh* to record the entire narration, which the god agrees with a condition that the narration should not stop even for a moment when it is being recorded. *Vyasa* agrees but with one condition that he should put pen to the paper unless he has understood the significance of what he is recording since he has concealed mystical secrets from place to which he and his son *Shuka* knows and perhaps *Sanjaya* also knows 'लेखको भारतस्यास्य भव त्वं गणनायक | मयैव प्रोच्यमानस्य मनसा कल्पितस्य च || श्रुत्वैतत्प्राह विघ्नेशो यदि मे लेखनी क्षणम्| लिखतो नावतिष्ठेत्तदा स्यां लेखको ह्यहम्|| व्यासोऽप्युवाच तं देवमबुद्ध्वा मा लिख क्वचित्| ओमित्युक्त्वा गणेशोऽपि बभूव किल लेखकः || ग्रंथग्रन्थिं तदा चक्रे मुनिर्गूढं कुतूहलात्| यस्मिन्प्रतिज्ञया प्राह मुनिर्द्वैपायनस्त्विदम्|| अष्टौ श्लोकसहस्राणि अष्टौ श्लोकशतानि च | अहं वेद्मि शुको वेत्ति संजयो वेत्ति वा न वा || तच्छ्लोककूटमद्यापि ग्रथितं सुदृढं मुने | भेत्तुं न शक्यतेऽर्थस्य गूढत्वात्प्रश्रितस्य च ||'.

Then *Vyasa* or possibly his disciple, *Vaishampayana,* his principal disciple, added 24,000 verses, excluding the subsidiary episodes, which wise men refer as *Bharata* 'चतुर्विंशतिसाहस्रीं चक्रे भारतसंहिताम्|| उपाख्यानैर्विना तावद्भारतं प्रोच्यते बुधैः |', which was first communicated to *Shuka*, by his father *Krishna Dvaipayana. Krishna* had by that time, acquired the mystique venerated as supreme *Being* - उत्तम पुरुष dialectical or पुरुषोत्तम, a *God*, *Brahman,* assuming larger than life place in religious and psychological ethos of the nation as a natural extension of *vedic Vishnuism,* it being repeatedly emphasized - 'भगवान् वासुदेवश्च कीर्त्यतेऽत्र सनातनः | स हि सत्यमृतं चैव पवित्रं पुण्यमेव च ||'and 'यः स नारायणो नाम देवदेवः सनातनः | तस्यांशो वासुदेवस्तु कर्मणोऽन्ते विवेश ह ||'.

In the post-*vedic* era, with families ruined, kingdoms destroyed, ancient laws loosing their vitality, lawlessness causing perverted ideas of *Varnashrama* based on attributes and performance of actions, with interface of many gods, religions, beliefs and faiths many more verses and episodes came to added, possibly in the principal hands of *Bharagvas* as suggested by *Dr. V.S.Sukhtankar* and others, often in an unplanned manner, containing many laudatory invocations of gods, diverse philosophies and metaphysical theories of many religious sects like 'सांख्यं योगः पांचरात्रं वेदाः पाशुपतं तथा | ज्ञानान्येतानि राजर्षे विद्धि नानामतानि वै || उमापतिर्भूपतिः श्रीकण्ठो ब्रह्मणः सुतः | उक्तवानिदमव्यग्रो ज्ञानं पाशुपतं शिवः | पांचरात्रस्य वेत्ता तु भगवान्स्वयम्||'. Each social group added their own legends like those of *Chyavana* and *Sukanya*, *Auravaopakhyana*, *Parshurama's* extermination of arrogant *Kshatriyas* and performance of *Shraddha* ceremony in *Syamant Panchakam*, identified with *Kurukshetra,* his settlements in *Aparanata,* genealogical accounts of *Paurava* dynasty, *Yayatyupakhyana* dealing with *Yayati* and *Devayani*, including legends of *Savitri*, *Rshyashrunga*, *Aagstya*, *Vashishtha- Vishvamitra*, *Shakuntala* like *Matsyopakhyana, Ramopakhyana,* and *Nalopakshyana,* along with ethical and moral precepts enunciated like *Brihaspatiniti*, *Viduraniti*, *Yakshaprashna*, *Bhishma's* advise to *Yudhishthira* making the original composition along with supplementary legends and ethical and moral doctrines, a massive document of 1,00,000 verses 'इदं शतसहस्रं तु लोकानां पुण्यकर्मणाम्|| उपाख्यानैः सह ज्ञेयमाद्यं भारतमुत्तमम्|'. *Dr. V. S. Sukhtankar* says: '*This epic poem was at a critical stage of history appropriated by Bhrigus (who had certainly specialized in Dharma and Nitisara and probably also developed leanings toward Vishnuism) with idea of developing in to a vehicle of popular instruction and edification combined with entertainment*' (*Bhrigus and Bhargavas*, a historical study).

Therefore, what we are concerned here is history as depicted in *Mahabharata*. Yet when *Vyasa* documented *Mahabharata*, it is difficult to know how much he intended to portray *Krishna* as a historical person and how much he intended him as the symbol or tool, archetype of *Vaishnava* philosophies, observing how *Krishna* became in the hands of imaginative poets with great genius and charm become a religious icon for theocratic religion in consciousness of the masses than the symbol and a metaphor for spiritual truths delineating *essence* of the *Krishna-Consciousness.* If the intellectuals perceive *Krishna* more as fiction than real, then they would be breaking the branches and leaves never reaching out to the wood; if they search his human form, as an extra-ordinary character

transcending the people, place and period far beyond the limitations of temporal concepts and encompassing all that is spiritual and yet consistent with the *divine intent* and *purpose* for which he is claimed to have descended then they would surely find the wood.

According to *Mahabharata the* scriptures in the present form was narrated by *Vaishampayana* with additional verses during the मर्पमत्र or *serpant sacrifice* performed by *Janamejya,* son of Parikshita. *Vajashrava Sauti* son of *Lomaharshana* who heard the narration retold the same to the Brahmins gathered during sacrifice performed in *Naimisharanya* by *Shaunaka* - 'जनमेजयस्य गजर्षेः सर्पसत्रे महात्मनः || समीपे पार्थिवेन्द्रस्य सम्यक्परिक्षितस्य च | कृष्णद्वैपायनप्रोक्ताः सुपुण्या विविधा कथाः || कथिताश्चापि विधिवद्या वैशम्पायनेन वै | श्रुत्वाहं ता विचित्रार्था महाभाग्नर्माश्रिताः ||'. Though *Mahabharata* is referred as *Itihas*, history, it is not a historical document in the general sense in which the word is used. It is more a scriptures of purely psychic or mental experiences of exceptionally intellectual and highly disciplined minds, elaborated by collation of ancient historical or legends or tradition for presenting spiritual and mythical legends having been provided mystical and philosophical connotation for presentation in graphic details through poetic imagination. Mythology deals with symbols. It is not history; it is not concerned with objective reality. But that does not mean that it is not concerned with reality itself. It is concerned with subjective reality. These gods, these mythological symbols, do not exist outside you but they have a psychological existence and that psychological existence can be helpful, can be used. So the first thing to be understood is that they are not real persons in the world but they are real symbols in the psyche of man. The tools are as important as the truths which they are designed to communicate. Therefore, it is averred that he who knows the four *vedic* scriptures along with the auxiliary texts and *Upanishads*, but does not know the *upakhyana* (*Mahabharata*) has no learning 'यो विद्याचातुरो वेदान्सांगोपनिशदार्न्द्विजः | न चाख्यानं इद विद्यान्नैव स स्यार्दाविचक्षणः ||'.

Mahabharata along with *Puranas* became an important source of information of events *as they happened*, इतिहास. *Nirukta* defines इतिहास as 'इति हैवमासीदिति यः उच्यते स इतिहासः |' even as *Puranas* came to be referred as events that happened previously or in ancient times, पुरा, पुरा देवयुगे, पुरा कृतयुगे. *Brahmanda Purana* defines it as 'यस्मात्पुरा ह्यवुचंतत्पुराणं तेन तत्स्मृतम्' and *Matsya Purana* as 'पुराणं सर्वशात्राणा प्रथम ब्रम्हणा कृतम्| अनन्तरं च वक्त्रेभ्यो वेदस्तास्य विनिर्गताः ||. *Yajnavalkya* speaks of इतिहास and पुराण as the breath of *Brahman* 'स यथार्दैधाग्नेरभ्याहितात्पृथग्धूमा विनिश्चरन्ति, एवं वा अरेऽस्यमहतो भूतस्य निःश्वसितमेनद् . . इतिहासः पुराण विद्या..|| and *Narada* designates *Mahabharata* as पञ्चम वेद.

Bhagavan Purana, a पुराण is amalgamation of ten characteristics सर्ग creation of the primary elements, विसर्ग creation of animate and inanimate beings, स्थिति is status of the Supreme Being, पोशण is Lord's grace, ऊति constitute the desires which lead to bondage, मन्वन्तर narration of the *Manus* presiding over each युग, ईशानुकथा accounts of various divine descents, निरोध restraint of the sensory influence मुक्ति deliverance and आश्रय refuge in supreme place. According to *Kautilya* history is an aggregation of narrative of ancient accounts इतिवृत्त, biographical sketches of kings - आख्यायिका, illustrations - उदाहरण, principles of righteousness - धर्मशास्त्र, and the economic and political narratives अर्थशास्त्र.

Mahabharata, from these perspectives, ceases to be a mere history of *Bharatas* and becomes not the expression one individual but a scripture of the soul of a nation, of encyclopedic dimension with all the legends and myths, religious and ethical expressions, social and political ides, written by one person but by many not in one sitting but over generations. Myth is not a figment of imagination but a fact of life in history which transpired earlier in time and recollected and remembered through series of stories told and re-told, shared and communicated by all as story *believed*, believed and accepted as positive and enduring truth. Therefore, one finds in *Mahabharata* many philosophies as well as आख्यायिका told by persons distanced by people, places and period. Therefore, though *Mahabharata* and *Puranas* do not fall within the conventional definition of history, they meet *E.H.Carr's* definition as *Historiography*, '*...a progressive science, in the sense that it seeks to provide constantly expanding and deepening insights into a course of events which is itself progressive*' (*What is History?*).

The history which we can source from *Mahabharata* is the history of *Aryas*, beginning with *Vaivasvata Manu* as the ruler and the fatherfigure of all the tribes, whether the *Bharatas* who came crossing the mountainous regions of *Khandhar*, or as *Pauaravas* who came later crossing over the snow-packed peaks of *Kashmir* or even the *Atharvan-Angira-Bhargavas* who landed on the western coast of India coming via sea-route. *Vaivasvata Manu* founded two principal dynasties, designated as *solar* and the *lunar* families. *Solar* dynasty commences with his eight sons, *Ikshvaku, Nabhaga, Dhrista, Saryati, Narishyanta, Pramshu, Nabhagodhistha* and *Karusha* and the *Lunar* dynasty from his daughter *Ila* who married to *Budha* gave birth to *Pururavas*, the founder of lunar dynasty.

Unlike the *Bharatans* and their associates who on their way through Iranian plains had to encounter non-*Arya* communities who they despised as *An-arya,* uncultured the *Pauravas* came across communities with elf-like and charming disposition or even non-*Arya asuras* with who they freely interacted even entering in marital relations like *Pururava* with *Urvashi* or his son *Ayu* married *Prabha*, the daughter of *Svarabhanu*, a *danava* king and grand son *Yayati* married *Sharmistha* daughter of *danava* King *Virishaparvan* Even the *Atharvan-Angira-Bhargavas* having had close contacts with non-*Arya* communities in *Assyria, Sumeria* and later with those who were spread in *Iran* and the other border regions had no inhibition in continuing their relations even later whether with the *Pauravas* or the *asuras, dasa* and *danavas*.

Yayati had from *Sharmishtha* three sons *Anu*, *Druhyu* and *Puru* and from *Devayani* two sons, *Yadu* and *Turvasu*. After the conclusion of the *Dasarajnya* battle, in which his sons were routed by *Bharatas*, *Yayati* distributed his empire among his sons. *Yadu* the eldest son was given the territories south east embracing the lands watered by *Chambal, Betwa* and *Ken,* placing his youngest son *Puru* to continue the main line ruling over *Madhyadesha*, southern half of the *Ganga-Yamuna doab*, with *Pratishthan* as the capital. *Turvasu* got the south east territory around *Rewa*, and *Druhyu* the territory the territory west of *Yamuna* and north of *Chambal* and finally *Anu* being assigned the northern potion of the *Ganga-Yamuna doab*.

Of all these sons, we are concerned with *Yadu* and *Puru*, *Yadu* being the ancestor *Krishna* and *Puru* being the ancestor of *Kurus* i.e. of the *Pandavas* and *Kauravas*. The descendents of *Yadu* in later days extended their rule to *Gujarat-Saurashtra*, after destroying the non-*Arya* kings of that region. *Yadu* had two sons, *Kroshtri* and *Sahasrajit*. *Kroshtri* after seeking peace with *Sagar* of *Ayodhya*, temporarily settled in *Vidharbha* and after *Sagara's* death his descendents reclaimed much of their earlier territories which they had lost. *Kratha-Bhima*, had four sons, the third son *Andhaka* was installed in *Mathura*, on the banks of river *Yamuna*. Of his two sons *Bhajamana* and *Kukuru*, the former had one son *Andhaka* and the latter had two sons *Devaka* and *Ugrasena*. *Devaka* had one daughter, *Devaki* who was given in marriage to *Vasudeva* a nobleman in *Ugrasena's* court. *Ugrasena's* eldest son, *Kamsa* had usurped his father's throne under instigation of his father-in-law, *Jarasandha* the king of *Magadha*. *Kamsa's* happiness on the occasion of *Devaki's* marriage turned to hatred when it was prophesized that her eighth son would kill him. Thereupon, he imprisons her and *Vasudeva* so that all the children born to her will be known to him. Six of her children, the moment they were born, were killed by *Kamsa*. The birth of the seventh child was shrouded in mystery, it being claimed that the dead female child born to *Rohini*, *Vasudeva's* other wife staying in *Vraja,* was placed by *Devaki's* side, for the people of *Mathura* to mourn, while the seventh child born to *Devaki*, was placed with *Rohini* for her foster care without her being aware of it. The chronicler uses this as poetic repertoire to validate the divine descent of *Anant*, the great *naga* on whom *Narayana* is said to recline, as *Balarama* or *Sankarshana,* which name was given because of his having been transposed from one womb to the other, 'गर्भसंकर्पणात् नं वै पाहुः संकृष्णं भुवि | गर्भेति लोकरमणाद्वलं वलवदुच्छ्रयन्||'. There is a quaint account that *Hari* as *Brahman* plucked two hairs from his head, one was white and the other black, which entered *Rohini* and *Devaki's* wombs, one becoming *Balarama* and the other *Krishna*.

Yayati's youngest son *Puru*, born to *Sharmistha*, daughter of the *danava* king *Vrishapravan*, was assigned the central portion of the empire, with *Pratishthan*, as the capital city. *Puru's* descendents did not flourish, having to live their life in exile. A later descendent *Kuru* performed a great sacrifice at *Prayag*, perhaps indicating the extent of his rule, with clear divisions as *Kurukshetra* (cultivated land) and *Kurujangala*, (the uncultivated land).In this dynasty, generations later was born *Prateepa* who had three sons, *Devapi*, *Bahlika* and *Shantanu*. *Devapi* being a leper was unfit to be ruler. *Bahlika* expressed his unwillingness to become the king, therefore, the throne finally went to *Shantanu*. *Shantanu* marries *Ganga*, the divine one born human. To her are born eight *Vasus*, the presiding deities of the eight directions, seven of whom are killed by her the moment they are born as requested by them to go back to their quarters, leaving the eight son to live his human life. One of the conditions who *Ganga* had placed on *Shantanu* was that he will not question the reason for killing her children once they were born and the moment he objects her actions she would leave him. *Shantanu* keeps quiet but objects when she was about to throw the eight child in the waters upon which she deserts leaving the eighth, who comes to be known as *Devavrta*.

Then *Shantanu* marries *Satyavati*, daughter of a fisherman, referred as *Matsyagandha*, but not before *Devavrta* renounces his claim to the throne and remain celibate. Since this was a terrible and momentous decision, it came to be known as भीष्म पनिज्ञा. and *Devavrtaa* became *Bhishma*. *Chitrangada* and *Vichitrayvirya* were born to *Satyavati* as the next rulers of the *Kuru* dynasty. *Chitrangada* is killed in battle leaving *Vichitrayvirya* to ascend the throne, who marries *Ambika* and *Ambalika*, the daughters of the ruler of *Kasi*. But before he could have any children, he too dies. Therefore, *Bhisma* decides to continue the lineage through नियांग (levirate) ceremony through *Dvaipayana Krishna*, since he happens to be born to *Satyavati's* earlier from *Parashara muni*. *Dvaipayana Krishna* informs *Satyavati*, his mother, that *Ambika's* son *Dhritarashtra* would be born blind because she closed her eyes seeing his brilliance, *Ambalika's* son *Pandu* would be born pale because she became pale seeing his brilliance. When an attempt was made third time, *Ambalika*, being frightened, sends her maid servant instead to *Dvaipayana Krishna* who having received the seed with reverence, to her is born *Vidura* wise and noble. *Dhritarashtra* marries *Gandhari* and had hundred sons and one daughter. *Pandu* marries *Pratha* daughter of *Kuntibhoja*, a cousin of *Vasudeva* and hence *Krishna's* aunt and also *Madri*, the sister of *Shalya*. *Pratha* known also as *Kunti* had three sons - *Yadhishthira*, *Bhima* and *Arjuna* and *Madri*, two sons - *Nakula* and *Sahadeva*. *Pandu* dies and *Madri* follows him on the pyre. *Kunti* then returns to *Hastinapur* with the five *Pandavas*.

Thus not only *Krishna* was a *Paurava* but *Kauravas* and *Pandavas* were as well *Pauravas*. Therefore, the rapport between *Krishna* and all other characters in *Mahabharata* depended significantly from place to place, depending upon the persons, place and the period, as a friend, a relative, leader of clan, a statesman among the polity, an intellectual guide wise temporal matters and a metaphysical teacher in spiritual matters. The various characters in the scriptures being well delineated by *Vyasa* their response to *Krishna* does not overlap.

Since *Mahabharata* being essentially a story of the *Pandavas* and *Kauravas* with their ancestors and the descendents, Krishna, comes on the scene very much later during *Draupadi's* स्वयंवर not as *god* born as *human*, but a human being who attained a distinguished opposition in the polity. Even while narrating the names of the great kings and princes of the day who attended the स्वयवर his name along with his brother and sons is referred very much down, because though personally he was well respected his family tribe *Vrushni-Andhakas Yadavas* did not stand high in fame.

Vyasa makes a pointed reference that while others had gathered for *Draupadi's* hand in marriage, 'त्वदर्थमाग्ता भद्रे क्षत्रियाः पथिता भुवि |' *Krishna* was there with his brother, *Balarama*, and sons *Pradyumna*, *Samba*, *Aniruddha* and many others 'संकर्पणो वासुदेवो रौक्मिणेयश्च वीर्यवान्| साम्बश्च चारुदेष्णश्च पद्युम्निः सगदस्तथा ||' ostensibly seeking some one other than *Draupadi*. Therefore when he sees *Arjuna* entering the hall

with his brothers with the gait of elephants 'दृष्ट्वा तु तान्मत्तगजेन्द्ररूपान्पञ्चाभिपद्मानिव वारणेन्द्रान्|' he recognizes them. While all others engrossed in *Druapadi* alone suffering the arrows shot by god of love bring attracted by *Draupadi's* beauty, 'तां द्रौपदीं प्रेक्ष्य तदा स्म सर्वे कन्दर्पबाणाभिहता बभूवुः' did not see *Pandavas* entering the hall, *Krishna* alone sees them entering pointing them to his brother with obvious pleasure, 'शशंस रामाय युधिष्ठिरं स भीमं सजिष्णुं यमौ च वीरौ |' And when *Kunti's* son *Arjuna* moves forward to position the arrow to his bow, he knew that *Druapadi* was as good as his, expresses his pleasure pressing his brother's hands- 'ततो वरिष्ठः सुरदानवानमुदारधीर्वृष्णिकुलप्रवीरः | जहर्ष रामेण स पीड्य हस्तं हस्तं गतां पाण्डुसुतस्य मत्वा || न जज्ञुरन्ये नृपवीर मुख्याः संछन्नरूपानथ पाण्डुपुत्रान्|'.

Krishna having taken descent for fulfilling the *divine intent* and *purpose*, he is now ready now that nar is also found he can commence his ministry for fulfilling the divine intent and purpose, in which enterprise both are to respond on temporal as well as spiritual foundations. There are many instance where both disagree with him each other and in one instance *Arjuna* even competing with him in courage and bravery as when he tells Krishna that he is taking his assistance because of his fame that success and glory accompanies him wherever he goes, otherwise he himself alone is capable and competent of defeating all the *Kauravas*, when *Krishna* chides him that he seeming to be competing with him 'उपपन्नमिदं पार्थ यत्स्पर्धेथा मया सह | सारथ्यं ते करिष्यामि कामः सम्पद्यतां तव ||'. To *Draupadi* he is a companion and friend who comes to help her when she beseeched him and took refuge, realizing 'महत्यापदि सम्प्राप्ते स्मर्तव्यो भगवन्हरिः ||', referring to him as 'गोविन्द द्वारकावासिन्कृष्ण गोपिजनप्रिय |.. हे नाथ हे रमानाथ व्रजनाथार्तिनाशन |.. कृष्ण कृष्ण महायोगिन्विश्वात्मन्विश्वभावन |' when all others stood helpless and unsupportive in spite of her pride of her temporal affiliation as wife of the *Pandavas*, sister to *Drishtadhyumna*

On the other side in spite of knowing that *Krishna* is god incarnate, *Narayana* born again as *Krishna* as *Vyasa* says 'यः स नारायणो नाम देवदेवः सनातनः | तस्यांशो वासुदेवस्तु कर्मणोऽन्ते विवेश ह ||' and repeatedly confirmed by *Narada* and many others sages we have *Bhishma* who declared 'अनुजानीहि मां कृष्ण वैकुण्ठ पुरुषोत्तम || रक्षाश्च ते पाण्डवाया भवान्येषां परायणम्|... यतः कृष्णस्ततो धर्मो यतो धर्मस्ततो जयः |... त्वां तु जानाम्यहं देवं पुराणमृषिं सत्तनम | नरेण सहितं देव बदर्या सुचिरोषितम्|| तथा मे नारदः प्राह व्यासश्च सुमहातपाः | नरनारायणवेतौ संभूतौ मनुजेष्विति || and *Drona, Karna, Kripa* and *Ashvatthama* aligning themselves with the evil minded *Duryodhana* with a strange sense of obligation, which are purely of temporal character or as *Karna* gives voice to his feeling 'धृतराष्ट्रकुले कृष्ण दुर्योधनसमाश्रयात्| मया त्रयोदशसमाभुक्तं राज्यमकण्टकम्|| वधाद्वंधाद्भयाद्वाऽपि लोभाद्वाऽपि जनार्दन | अनृतं नोत्सहे कर्तुं धार्तराष्ट्रस्य धीमतः | पौय चापि महद्राज्यं तदहं मधुसूदन | स्फीतं दुर्योधनायैव संप्रदास्यामरिन्दम्||', while some others like *Dhritarashtra, Sanjaya* and *Gandhari* aligning with the attachment to him. There are instances where even some like *Gandhari* and *Uttanka Bhargava*, who even after their knowing his divine essence have no hesitation to curse him or prepared to curse him. One would be struck with a wonder when all these great characters takes shelter under temporary obscurity over mind or delusion, it is *Duryodhana* who comes out as consistent in his sincerity, honesty and courage to acknowledge that he acts as he does, being directed by the attributes (गुण) and inclination (स्वभाव) born of प्रकृति, when he declares 'जानामि धर्मं न च मे प्रवृत्तिः जानाम्यधर्मं न च मे निवृत्तिः | केनापि देवेन हृदि स्थितेन यथा नियुक्तो तथा करोमि ||'. Therefore, even he knows that *Krishna* is respected in the three worlds 'स हि पूज्यतमो लोके कृष्णः पृथुलोचनः | त्रयाणामपि लोकानां विदितं मम सर्वथा ||' he agrees with *Vidura* 'यदाह विदुरः कृष्णे सर्वं तत्सत्यमुच्यते | अनुरक्तो ह्यसंहार्य पार्थान्प्रति जनार्दनः ||' therefore should not give *Krishna* honour not because he does not deserve them but because he will take it as if we are frightened of him'. Even as he lay dieing, *Duryodhana* says, '*The liability to death is said to have been ordained by the creator, death coming to all in course of time . . . If vedas be authoritative then I have certainly acquired eternal regions. I am not ignorant of Krishna of immensurable glory. But he causes me fall not observing* क्षत्रधर्म*. I have obtained him. On no account, therefore, anyone should grieve for me*'.

It was the genius of *Dvaipayana Krishna- Vyasa* that transformed the panorama of contrary and contradictory temporal events connected with the myths and legends of those times synthesizing them to become spiritual, describing the struggle between the forces of *Light* and of *Darkness*, not only in society as a while but within one's own *self*, for fulfilling the *divine intent & purpose* - देवतानां हि यत्कार्यम्,

which *Vishnu* had set forth for himself making *Dhritarashtra's* sons his instruments, gathering *Kshatriya* on the battle field of *Kurukshetra* and destroy and reduce the burden on *Mother Earth*. 'धार्तराष्ट्रस्य पुत्राणां यस्तु ज्येष्ठः शतस्य वै | दुर्योधन इति ख्यातः स ते कार्यं करिष्यति ||..तस्यार्थे पृथिवीपालाः कुरुक्षेत्रं समागताः || अन्योन्यं घातयिष्यन्ति दृढैः शस्त्रैः प्रहारिणः | तास्ते भविता देवि भारस्य युधि नाशनम्|| य एष सुतो राजन्लोकसंहारकारणात्|| कलेवंशः समुत्पन्नो गान्धार्यां जठरे नृप | दैवयोगात्समुत्पन्ना भ्रातरश्चास्य तादृशः | शकुनिर्मातुलश्चैव कर्णश्च परमः सखा || धार्तराष्ट्रस्य पुत्राणां यस्तु ज्येष्ठः शतस्य वै | दुर्योधन इति ख्यातः स ते कार्यं करिष्यति ||'. The *Mahabharata* is, therefore, comes out as a combination of simple, straightforward narration of the events which led to the great war between *Pandavas* and *Kauravas*, with the part played by *Krishna* prior, during and later brought about, with his divinity suggested but not overtly emphasized.

The present study in the personality of *Krishna* with *Mahabharata* as a backdrop has one undeniable purpose to study the temporal to be enlightened of the spiritual. When *Arjuna* informs *Krishna* that he was told by *Vyasa* that he was *Narayana* who has become *Hari* and as *Narayana* he had performed sacrifices in ancient times - 'स त्वं नारायणो भूत्वा हरिरासीः परन्तप |..तथा नारायण पुरा क्रतुभिर्भूरिदक्षिणैः ||', *Krishna* replies that verily *Arjuna* is *Krishna* and *Krishna* is *Arjuna* and whoever hates *Arjuna* hates him as well and who ever is attuned to *Arjuna* is attuned to him as well - 'ममैव त्वं तवैवाहं ये मदीयास्तवैव ते | यस्त्वां द्वेष्टि स मां द्वेष्टि यस्त्वामनु स मामनु || . . अनन्यः पार्थ मत्तस्त्वं त्वत्तश्चाहं | नावयोरन्तरं शक्यं वेदितुं भरतर्षभ ||'.

Therefore, to study *Mahabharata* and *Krishna's* role therein has to be viewed in the context of a struggle between the forces of *Light* and the forces of *Darkness;* the luminous resplendence of *Krishna* becomes visible, as ज्योतिषां ज्योतिः *Vyasa* handled with restraint and reservations, the relationship of *Pandavas* with *Krishna-saga,* the temporal balanced with miraculous, with definite penchant to keep his divine personality in the back-ground than make it aggressively assertive. What we see in *Mahabharata* is *Krishna* who is human, wise, discerning, and often assertive and drawing attention in a compelling manner, a great statesman, strong and powerful political person in times of peace and in times of war, a practitioner of temporal arts as well spiritual philosopher. But never transgressing the social and political limits, moral and ethical values not prevalent during the period when he lived.

Writing a biographical account of a great person becomes difficult since one is likely to be influenced by personality rather than be convinced by his philosophy. And when the subject matter is one like *Krishna*, it is as difficult as to assess luminosity of the Sun, velocity of the Wind, speciousness of the Space, depth of the Ocean or mood of the seasons. No historical biography of *Krishna* has been ever written, since what has come to us is mass of legends relating to his life, his achievements and his times, making him often not a person but an idea, a theme, a hypothesis, which is to be sought from *Mahabharata* and other *puranic legends and anecdotes.*

One is obliged to study *Krishna's* life and thoughts studying *Mahabharata* and *Puranas*, with full consciousness that they are not historical documents in traditional sense but scriptures founded on temporal events relating to persons, places and period when with reasonable conjecture one may assume, basing one's conclusions not on the symbols and metaphors used but from the suggestions and meanings which can be drawn from them. Because as *George Santayana* remarks in his book *The Sense of Beauty*, *'Religion is human experience interpreted by human imagination. The idea that religion contains a literal, not symbolic representation of truth and life is simply an impossible idea. Whoever entertains it has not come within the region of profitable philosophizing on that subject'.* Communication is not mechanical transfer of information. Unless the information is well understood by the receiver, in the same sense as intended by the sender the process of communication is not complete.

III. Krishna - Life

Chapter - I

The name *Krishna*, meaning one with dark complexion, is not an unusual name having been given to many even before *Devakiputra Krishna* was born. In *Rigveda* we have a seer *Krishna Angiras*, a seer 'अय वां कृष्णो अश्विना हवनं वाजिनीवसु | मध्वः सोमस्य पीतवे || शृणुत जरितुर्हवं कृष्णस्य स्तुवन्तो नरा | मध्वः सोमस्य पीतवे ||' (*VIII.85.3-5*). *Krishna Harita* is another one who was a teacher 'अथ हास्मा एतत्कृष्णहारितो वाग्ब्राह्मणमिवोपोदाहरति |' (*Aitareya Aranyaka II.2.6)*. There was a non-*Arya* warrior, *Krishna* with his army of thousand warriors whom *Indra* defeated on the banks of *Anshumati* river 'अव द्रप्सो अंशुमतीमतिष्ठदियानः कृष्णो दशभिः सहस्रैः | आवत्तमिन्द्रः शच्या धमन्तमप स्नेहितीर्नृमणा अधत्त || द्रप्समपश्यं विषुणे चरन्तमुपह्वरे नद्यो अंशुमत्याः | नभो न कृष्णमवतस्थिवांसमिष्यामि वो वृषणो युध्यताजौ ||' (*VIII.96.13-14*). In *Dvapara yuga* we have *Dvaipayana Krishna,* a dark-complexioned one born to non--*Arya* fisher woman, *Satyavati* who was also considered as one of the *divine descent* like *Krishna*.- 'यो व्यस्य वेदांश्चतुरस्तपसा भगवानृषिः | लोके व्यासत्वमापेदे कार्ष्ण्यात्कृष्णत्वमेव च ||' Finally, we have *Devakiputra Krishna* whom *Ghora Angiras*, *Rigvedic* seer of hymn *(X.108.10)*, 'नाहं वेद भ्रातृत्वं नो स्वसृत्वमिन्द्रो विदुरङ्गिरसश्च घोराः |' is said to have initiated *Devakiputra Krishna,* the three eternal three foundational principles that the *self* within him is indestructible, unshakable and the very essence of life - 'एतत्त्रयं प्रतिपद्येताक्षितमसि अच्युतमसि प्राणसंशितमसीति |' (*Chhandogya Up.III.xvii.5*).

With *Krishna's* deification in the post-*Dvapra yuga* he came first to be associated with and spoken as the same seer *Narayana* born again who in ancient era performed austere penance in *Badari*, and possibly was the seer *Purusha Sukta* (*Rigveda*.X.90) 'यस्तु नारायणो नाम देवदेवः सनातनः | तस्यांशो मनुषेष्वासीद् वासुदेवः प्रतापवान्||', 'नरनारायणौ यौ तौ पूर्वं देवौ विभावसो | सम्प्राप्तौ मानुषे लोके कार्यार्थं हि दिवौकसम्||', 'यः स नारायणो नाम देवदेवः सनातनः | तस्यांशो वासुदेवस्तु कर्मणोऽन्ते विवेश ह ||'and later as *Vishnu, Shiva* revealing 'असतां निग्रहार्थाय धर्मसंरक्षणाय च | अवतीर्णो मनुष्याणामजायत यदुक्षये || स एवं भगवान्विष्णुः कृष्णेति परिकीर्त्यते | अनाद्यमजन्तं देवं प्रभुं लोकनमस्कृतं | - he is *Vishnu* who descends for the protection of righteousness and destruction of the *Yadavas*, adored as the lord of the worlds, with neither beginning nor ant end the worlds. He is *Narayana,* the eternal godhead dwelling - आयन in नार - the waters, symbolizing *Time* and *motion* 'कालोऽस्मि लोकक्षयकृत्प्रवृद्धो लोकान्समाहर्तुमिह प्रवृत्तः |' - movement, the origin, 'आपो नारा इति प्रोक्ता आपो वै नरसूनवः | अयनं तस्य ताः पूर्वं तेन नारायणः स्मृतः ||', controller and terminator of all motion. In *Mahabharata* as one pervading all the creation, he came to be known by many names which were defined as 'कृषिर्भूवाचकः शब्दो णश्च निर्वृत्तिवाचकः | तयोरैक्यं परं ब्रह्म कृष्ण इत्यभिधीयते ||' - कृष् means power of attraction, ण means Bliss. H is also called पुण्डरीकाक्ष since he abides in the inner core of the heart पुण्डरीक, he is अज unborn since he is not born to any one through any human womb, दामोदर since he becomes revealed उदर through his own energy दमाद्, हृषीकेश since he becomes effulgent with pleasure, happiness, satisfaction, अधोक्षज since he does not become weak with any fall, पुरुषोत्तम since he the best among all tat abides within, विष्णु since he envelopes the three worlds, जिष्णु since he attains supremacy over all, अनन्त as the eternal, गोविन्द since wise in wisdom गौ as well as its communicator गां विन्दति.

Puranas picked up this thread and further strengthened the association of *Krishna* with *vedic Vishnu* and development of *Vaishnavism*. His birth along with *Balarama* (*Sankarshana*) being attributed to *Narayana* plucking two hairs from his head, one white and the other black, which entered *Rohini* and *Devaki's* wombs, one becoming *Balarama* and the other *Krishna* 'ततः सर्वे सम्बभूवुर्धरण्याम्| स चापि केशौ हरिरुद्बबर्ह शुक्लमेकमपरं चापि कृष्णम्|| तौ चापि केशौ निविशेतां यदूनां कुले स्त्रियौ देवकीं रोहिणीं च | तयोरेको बलदेवो बभूव योऽसौ श्वेतस्तस्य देवस्य केशः | कृष्णो द्वितीयः केशवः सम्बभूव केशो योऽसौ वर्णतः कृष्ण उक्तः ||'. In popular imagination *Krishna* continued to be represented as dark-complexioned one; his devotes claiming to be attracted to him even when they see dark clouds in the sky.

According to *puranic* tradition, *Krishna* was born to *Devaki* in a prison at midnight, eighth day of the dark half of *Shravana*, when the surroundings were dark and obscure, with ignorance and unrighteousness prevailing in the world. The symbolism is striking as when one is in shackles of primordial world, with mind obscured by forces of *Darkness*. His departure too is symbolic dyeing like a human being but revealing his luminous resplendent form, giving up his mortal coil in *Phalguna* when the Moon was full, conveying the situation as when one leaves making the world enlightened with his

supreme Teachings, living an eventful life for 125 years, as a testimony of a great life lived. He became testimony and testament, a beckon light, a prototype of what an ordinary human being aspire to be. He provided the perennial principles धर्म, and a philosophy to overcome un-righteousness of the dark forces whose long pernicious shadows were perceived influencing the minds and hearts of the people and which prevail with intensity and would be operative increasingly in *Kali yuga*. *Krishna's* presence was so overwhelming that *Kali* could step in only after *Krishna's* departure - 'यदा मुकुन्दं भगवानक्षमां त्यक्त्वा स्वपदं गतः | तद्दिनात्कलिगयातः सर्वसाधनवाधकः ||' and 'विष्णोर्भगवतो भानुः कृष्णाख्योऽसौ दिवं गतः | तदाविशत्कलिर्लोकं पापे यद्रमते जनः ||' says *Bhagavat Purana*.

Harivamsha and *Bhagavat Purana* go lyrical when they narrate *Krishna's* childhood, which are as captivating as are mind-blogging in description. *Krishna* was born the eighth child to *Devaki* in the middle of a dark night, when it was raining profusely accompanied with thunder and lightening. River *Yamuna* was turbulent and dense fog covered it. In such conditions, *Krishna* was picked by his father *Vasudeva* unseen and unnoticed by the prison guards whose mind was obscured by great illusion, and smuggled to *Vraja* to place him in the foster care of *Yashoda*, wife of his friend *Nanda*. The narrative records that the female child born to *Yashoda* was replaced by the side of *Devaki*. *Kamsa* remained unaware, his mind completely obscured. When *Kamsa* on the following morning comes to the prison, without realizing that it was a male child born to *Devaki* was to be his *Death*, he lifts the hapless female child on her side and dashes on the stone and kills. But the events strangely turn when the child who was in truth *Krishna's* potency slips from his hand declaring that his killer is safe and is growing well. *Kamsa* is struck with wonder and confused by the oracle seeing the fate playing the game in his life. He becomes remorseful and pardons his sister, releasing her and her husband from prison.

Kamsa was not cruel and his love for his sister was great. But the fear generated by the prophesy that her child would be *Death* to him obscured his mind of all senses of discrimination. And as one desperate, his response was unenlightened for he decides to get all babies born in the area on the previous eight days to be killed. But his human efforts would not succeed when *divine intent* and *purpose* was otherwise. Though *Kamsa's* danger loomed large from the moment he was born, as a child born in a perilous period and separated from the love of his mother *Devaki*, *Krishna* was showered with love by his loving foster parents and inhabitants of *Vraja*, *Vrindavana* and *Gokula*. Unknown to *Kamsa*, he was growing strong and destroyed all those who were sent to kill him. As his fame spread his will to destroy the evil uncle and safeguard others became determined, impending danger making *Kamsa* restless and desperate under the advises of his companions like *Keshi*, who advise him to hold a wrestling match in *Mathura* in which *Krishna* and *Balarama* would be invited ostensibly to see and enjoy the festivities but with the desire to kill them both either under elephant's feet or by the accomplished wrestlers. *Kamsa* wisely deputes *Akrura*, a kinsman of *Vasudeva*, to go *Vraja* and bring them to participate in the contest.

Akrura wgo was aware of *Kamsa's* evil design cautions *Nanda* but undaunted *Krishna* accompanies *Akrura* along with *Balarama*, *Nanda* and others to *Mathura*. When they reach *Mathura*, *Krishna* shrewdly requests *Akrura* to proceed to his own residence preferring to rest on the outskirts of the city. The subsequent day, he enters along with *Balarama* the magnificent city to survey the surrounding locale. The people become captivated by their look and demeanour following them wherever they go. As they reach the gates of the magnificent amphitheatre, they see a huge elephant

rushing towards them menacingly but *Krishna* and *Balarama* kill the same and making their way further, also kill the two mighty wrestlers waiting for them. While people applaud their great feet, furious *Kamsa* orders to confiscate their wealth and properties and banish them along with their companions. Hearing this, *Krishna* rushes towards him, drags him down from the throne and kills him in the presence and delight of the vast assembled crowd.

Thereafter he goes to *Devaki* and *Vasudeva*, his parents and bowing down to them, comforts them with words of endearment. Seeing the extra-ordinary feat performed by *Krishna* the parents momentarily briefly hesitate, observing which he in all humility seeks their pardon for not having attended to them earlier. Then though he could himself have ascended the throne after the death of *Kamsa*, as is normal in such circumstances and which people also would have preferred, he requests *Ugrasena*, his grandfather to ascend the throne. Though young as ever new nature, yet bold beyond his age, he became the symbol for sage advice and counsel for all those who approached him. Great believer In लोकसंग्रह - gathering of the principles for the *World Order* and क्षत्रधर्म his entire life was spent in preserving the ancient laws, whether in the temporal or the spiritual worlds. Beginning with the destruction of the evil emissaries sent by *Kamsa* to harass the simple minded cowherds and to kill him ending with his removal from the scene for having breached the code, dethroning his father who was duly ordained as king of *Mathura* breaching the code for *Kshatriyas*. By these steps *Krishna* showed not only his magnanimity but also the sense of justice, offering the throne back to one from whom it was snatched. The assembled *Yadus*, *Vrishnis*, *Andhakas* and *Madhus* were all overwhelmed by this gesture, being pleased to be ruled by *Ugrasena* over *Mathura* wisely and well. With a voice full of emotion, he thanks *Yashoda* and *Nanda*, his foster parents for all their love and affection given to him when fate had deprived him the love of his natural parents. He stays back in *Mathura* with his natural parents, thanking his foster parents, having breached the code for their love and affection showered on him. Acknowledging the fairness his desire, *Yashoda* and *Nanda* return back to *Vraja* with their companions.

Now that the sons were back with them, *Devaki* and *Vasudeva* arrange initiation in *Gayatri mantra* and sacred thread by their family priest *Garga* muni. Thereafter, they are sent to *Sandipani's* hermitage for being instructed in different arts, arms and armaments, including political arts and statecraft, in scriptures, ethical and moral philosophy. Perhaps it was here that *Ghora Angiras*, the great *Rigvedic* seer, communicated to *Krishna* the three foundational principles that the *self* within is indestructible, unshakable and the very essence of life - 'एतत्त्रयं पतिपाद्येत् अक्षितमसि अच्युतमसि पाणसंशितमसीति |'. At no time during his student days did he make it obvious to his co-students or his teachers of his *divine essence* being established in human form, though in later *puranas*, many miracles are attributed to him in his childhood days in *Vraja* and later in his adolescent as student, though *puaranas*, under intense fervour mention that all his companions, parents, teachers and the public at large knew him to be the very god in flesh, wondering the great illusory powers with which he was weaving the worldly events. Yet we see him in temporal life, behaving like a child, in adolescence like youth, performing his actions as any other human being of his age would. Nurtured in natural environment, schooled in discriminative intelligence and mature beyond his age, he and *Balarama* return to *Mathura* to take their place in the life and the social and political affairs.

Krishna was a great a revolutionary for his age. He transformed thinking among the undiscerning one rejoicing in the letter of the *Veda*, from the morass in which they had sunk in the web of rites and rituals, intent on heaven for attaining pleasures, power and end in rebirth as the fruit of actions performed, contending that there is nothing else. The institution of यज्ञ was transformed from external performance of sacrifices to internal sacrifice of one's performance of actions, considering that all actions otherwise than thus performed were bound to be shackles - 'यज्ञार्थात्कर्मणोऽन्यत्र लोकोयं कर्मबन्धनः |'. वर्णाश्रम which had become reduced to a caste system based on birth was revitalized as class system based on गुण attributes and कर्म. He promoted that wactions should be performed according to one's धर्म and गुण and

स्वभाव.

Even in social and political life, *Krishna* turned out to be a remarkable person for his age influencing and dominating, conformist in preserving the ancient laws and yet rebellious radical and innovative in promoting new ideas with confidence and courage to match the transformation of the social structure in tune with the changing façade of *Time Eternal*. Making *Wisdom*, the sheet anchor of his enlightened life, he compared life to a great sacrifice, where every thought, speech and actions becomes as and by way of sacrifice, he raised the concept of यज्ञ from the physical to the spiritual level, with clear awareness that any other course will enslave the spirit and shackle the actions.

In his childhood in *Vraja*, he exemplified his courage to defy the might of Indra in receiving the oblations and instead chose o offer the same to the nature surrounding the common masses around him. As an adolescent his first task was to counter the dark forces in the society who defied the ancient *Kshatra* Order, which respected defeat of the unrighteous king and no annexation of their empire. His philosophy became crystallized in *Bhagavad Gita*, wherein he suggested the wheel set in motion by *Prajapati* in earlier times for the maintenance of the *World order* by making hunger, thirst and abstention from pleasures the initiatory rites; eating, drinking and enjoying pleasures the intermediate satisfactory rites and austerity, charity, sincerity, non-injury and truthfulness the gifts to the presiding priests a sacrifice यज्ञ. The performance of these actions becomes the beginning of creation and death being its culmination, 'तस्मादाहुः सोष्यत्यसोष्टेति पुनरुत्पादनमेवास्य तन्मरणमेवावभृथः ||'. He declared that he has no actions to be performed in the three worlds or any thing to be gained which he does not possess - 'न मे पार्थास्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किञ्चन | नानवाप्तमवाप्तव्य..' (III.22) and concerned with unrighteousness and injustice he is born from time to resurge righteousness and justice by destroying the evil in men and establishing righteousness in them - 'यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत | अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम्|| परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम्| धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय सम्भवामि युगे युगे ||' (IV.7-8).

Having removed his uncle *Kamsa* from the throne, which he had illegally and un-righteously snatched for his own father, he placed his grandfather *Ugrasena* again on the throne. He got his parents released from captivity and gave solace to them and assured protection to his foster parents and the cowherds of *Vraja*. Seeing that initial tasks of his mission thus fulfilled, he shifted cast for himself a greater role, to influence the course of events in the polity of *Aryavarta*. He shifts his attention to *Hastinapur* where his aunt *Kunti*, recently widowed, lived with her five sons, suffering ill treatment under *Dhritarashtra* and his evil minded sons. *Bhagavat Purana* narrates that he deputed *Akrura* one of his kinsman to *Hastinaapura* to inquire about their welfare and keep himself well-informed. The report was not pleasant and he keeps the matter in mind to be dealt at proper time.

Krishna's first priority was then *Jarasandha*, who was not only angry with him for having killed his son-in-law *Kamsa* but was a blot on क्षत्रधर्म, having contravened the *Kshatriya* values by annexing the regions ruled by rival rulers and imprisoning them. *Magadha* kingdom was strong even for *Krishna* to deal with military encounters, even the people of *Mathura* having experienced the domineering position of *Jarasandha* during *Kamsa's* rule being hesitant to deal with him and his armies, supported as he was by *Shishupala* of *Chedi*, *Shrutayu* of *Kalinga*, *Duryodhana* of *Hastinapura*, *Rukmi* son of *Bhishmaka Paundraka* who called himself *Vasudeva - all* evil minded aggressors destroying their crops, cattle and their wealth. All these rulers were obscure in mind and evil by nature, therefore, could not stomach the luminous Sun rising on the horizon. Opposition to *Krishna* became intensified and when they found themselves incapable to engage him in battle, sought help from outsiders.

When the residents of *Mathura* panic being tormented by *Jarasandha's* repeated assaults and desire to desert their homeland for a safe haven far from the *Mathura*, *Krishna* realizes that his presence in *Mathura* is what makes the inhabitants of *Mathura* a convenient target for *Jarasandha* and decides to depart from *Mathura* along with *Balarama* as the only solution available for them. *Ugrasena* recalls that *Yadu's* descendents *Haihayas* had settled on the west coast of India with glory and distinction and

establishing prosperous kingdoms. He points out to *Krishna* that since it would be difficult to guard *Mathura* ns the inhabitants against *Jarasnadha's* repeated attacks, emigration from *Mathura* would be the only solution, leaving final decision to *Krishna's* wise counsel since he was their leader. *Krishna* agrees to his grandfather's counsel saying, it is wisdom not to live in the back drop of a strong enemy and decides that it is wisdom to go with *Balarama* far away from *Jarasandha*

Krishna appreciates the anxiety in his mind and the reason for *Jarasandha's* animosity being none other than he himself. Therefore, protect the citizen of *Mathura* and the inhabitants from *Jarasandja's* wrath, *Krishna* along with *Balarama* depart far away towards southwest near the *Sahya* mountains deciding that it is not helpful to stay 'बलिनः संनिकृष्टे तु न स्थेयं पण्डितेन वै | अपकमेद्धि कालज्ञः समर्थो युद्धमुद्वहेत्|| अहं तावत्सहायेण मुहूर्तेऽस्मिन्प्रकाशितं | जीवितार्थं गमिष्यामि शक्तिमानप्यशक्तवत्|| ततः मह्याचलयुतं सहायेणाहमक्षयम्| आत्मद्वितीयः श्रीमन्तंप्रवेक्ष्ये दक्षिणापथम्||' (*Harivamsha*). They travel down to reach *Karavir* (modern *Kolhapur*), where they meet the great sage *Bhargava Parashurama*, described as 'गौरमग्निशिखाकारं तेजसा भास्करोपमम्| क्षत्रान्तकरमक्षोभ्यं वपुष्मन्तमिवार्णवम्||'and shining as 'भार्गवं रामासीनं मन्दरस्थं यथा रविम्|'. When they confide in the great sage the reason for their coming over to these parts, who advises them that he is well aware of their deeds in *Vraja* - 'विदितो मे व्रजे वासस्तव पद्मनिभेक्षण | दानवनां वधश्चापि कसस्यापि दुरात्मनः ||' but cautions him that *Sahya* mountains are not safe for them. *Shrugala* who presently rules *Karvair* is angry with *Krishna* - नित्यं परकोपनः and calls himself *Vasudeva*. He has already killed many members of their family - 'नृपेण तेन गोविन्द तव वंशभवा नृपाः | दायादा निहताः सर्वे वीर द्वेपानुशायिना ||'. Therefore, *Bhargava* suggests that they should go and live on *Gomant* mountain which is described as 'गोमन्तमिति विख्यातं नैकश्रृङ्गविभूषितम्| . .विश्रामभूतं देवानां ज्योतिर्भिरभिसंवृतम्|| सोपानभूतं स्वर्गस्य गगनादिमिवेच्छ्रितम्| तं विमानावतरणं गिरिं मेरुमिवपरम्|| तस्योत्तमे महाश्रुङ्गे भास्वन्तौ देवरूपिणौ | उदयास्तस्यां सूर्यं सोमं च ज्योतिषांपतिम्||' (*Harivamsha*), the resting place for gods, where one sees gods descending from their flying vehicles, where they can enjoy the dawn and setting of the Sun over sea, with the Moon and stars in the sky.

Jarasandha comes to know that *Krishna* and *Balarama* have reaching *Gomanta* mountain have settled there. He surrounds the mountain with a great army, along with many of his associates who were rulers of different *Janapadas*. Finding the mountain difficult to be conquered at the suggestion of *Shishupala*, he sets the mountain to fire, which flares up destroying much of the forests 'शुष्ककाष्ठैस्तृणर्वेष्ट्य सर्वतः पर्वतोत्तमम | अग्निना दीपयिष्यामो दह्येतां रामकेशवौ ||', seeing which *Balarama* and *Krishna* jump down from the mountain and engage themselves in a great fight. After the ferocious encounter, *Jarasandha* leaves the battle defeated by *Balarama* 'दीर्घकालं महाराज निजघ्नुरितरेतरम्| पराजिते त्वपकान्ते जरासंधे महीपतौ | विविक्तमभवत्सैन्यं परावृत्तमहारथम्||'. When *Shishupala* was also on the point of being killed the frightened king of *Chedi* reminds them that he should not be killed because he is their aunt's husband (*Harivamsha*). They leave him unharmed and proceed to *Karavira*.

Seeing *Krishna* approaching his capital, *Shrugala* the ruler of *Karavira* brings his army and addresses *Krishna* arrogantly that he should not pride having defeated armies not lead by competent warrior like him. He will kill surely *Krishna* and remain undisputed leader celebrated as the sole वासुदेव 'लोकेऽस्मिन्वासुदेवोऽहं भविष्यामि हते त्वयी | हतं मयी त्वमाप्येको वासुदेवो भविष्यति ||'. (*Harivamsha*). From *Shrugala's* statement it becomes clear that in those days the term वासुदेव had a special significance as one who possessed great eminence or divine attributes, a designation much coveted by all. The word वासुदेव signified probably one who, possessing special attributes, performed great deeds with great upsurge of divine essence. *Mahabharata* attributes this divine essence in *Dvapara Yuga* to *Krishna* alone 'यः स नारायणो नाम देवदेवः सनातनः | तस्यांशो वासुदेवस्तु कर्मणोऽन्ते विवेश ह ||'. Therefore, *Krishna* was वासुदेव, not only because he was the son of वसुदेव but also because in him exists the divine essence of *Sriman Narayana*. Or else even *Balarama* would have been referred as वासुदेव having been the son of वसुदेव. *Krishna* coveted the honour as the undisputed claimant, therefore, he challenges and kills *Shrugala*, placing *Shrugala's* son on the throne he returns to *Mathura* assuring protection to his people.

Harivansha narrates another instances where *Paundraka* of *Paundras*, an associate of

Jarasandha, like *Shrugal* earlier used to claim among his people as the real वासुदेव, saying that he has won all the kings but the *Vrishnis* refuse to give taxes being protected by *Krishna*, who refuse to recognize him as the real वासुदेव on the strength of his discus. Since he too has the discus, mace etc he is fully equipped bragging that he will conquer *Krishna* with his weapons call himself alone as the true *Vasudeva* - 'जिता च पृथिवी सर्वा जिताश्च नृपसत्तमाः | वृष्णयस्ते बलोन्मत्ताः कृष्णमाश्रित्य गर्विताः || दास्यन्ति मे करं सर्वे न हि ते कृष्णसंश्रयात्| स तु कृष्णश्चक्रबलान्मामवज्ञाय निष्ठति || अहं चक्रीति गर्भोभूत् तस्य गोपस्य सर्वदा | शङ्खी चक्री गदी शाङ्र्गी शरी तूणी महायवान्|| एवमादिर्महागर्वस्तस्य सम्प्रति वर्तते | लोके च मम यन्नाम वासुदेवेति विश्रुतम्||..तत्राहं च गदी खड्गी शङ्खी चक्री तनुत्रवान्| युधि जेता च कृष्णस्य नात्र कार्या विचारणा || मां च ब्रूत नृपाश्चैव गदिनं चक्रिणं तथा | शङ्खिनं शाङ्र्गिणां वीरं ब्रूत नित्यं नृपोत्तमाः || वासुदेवेति मां ब्रूत न तु गोपं यदुत्तमम्| एकोऽहं वासुदेवो हि हत्वा तं गोपदारकम्||' (*Harivamsha*).

When once *Paundraka* asks *Narada*, the wandering minstrel to confirm that he alone was the true वासुदेव, possessed of conch, discus, mace and the rest and not the *Krishna* who calls himself वासुदेव being a mere cowherd of no significance - 'नारदेदं वद त्वं हि यत्र यत्र गतो भवान्|| तत्र तत्र तपःसिद्धो लोके प्रथितवीर्यवान्| पौण्ड्र एव च विख्यातो वासुदेवेति शब्दिताः || शंङ्खी चक्री गदी शाङ्र्गी खड्गी तूणी तनुत्रवान्| विजेता राजसिंहानां दाता सर्वस्य सर्वदा ||.. योऽद्य गोपकनामासौ वासुदेवेति शब्दितः | तस्य वीर्यबलं न स्तो नाम्नोऽस्य मम धारणे || स हि गोपो वृथा बाल्याद्धारयत्येव नाम मे | इदं निश्चिनु विप्रेन्द्र एक एव भवाम्यहम्||' (*Hariavamsha*). *Narada* wonders how can he call himself the sole वासुदेव when *Janardana* is alive and ruling the world. Therefore, he should stop calling himself वासुदेव. If *Krishna* hears of this he will surely cause his extermination 'किं नु वक्तुं तथा राजन्नुत्सहे नृपसत्तम | महीं शास्ति देवेशे चक्रपाणौ जनार्दने ||.. अज्ञानादवक्तुमेवं च समर्थाः प्राकृता जनाः ||.. अदिदेवः पुराणात्मा दर्प ते व्यपनेष्यति | हास्यमेतन्महाराज यच्च वै तत्र संस्थितम्|| शाङ्र्गं खड्गं तथा राजन्महाघोरं न दाप्यते | अतीव ह्रासकालोऽय तव सम्प्रति वर्तते ||'.

Hearing *Narada's* admonition, *Paundraka* summarily dismisses the sage from his presence upon which *Narada* comes to *Krishna* and narrates all that transpired. *Krishna* assures him that whatever *Paundraka* may brag the arrogant one will surely be punished. Saying thus *Krishna* he goes to *Badari*. Seeing his absence from *Dvaraka*, *Paundraka* comes with a great army. *Satyaki* of *Vrishnis* challenges him saying that how any other than *Krishna* can ever claim to be *Vasudeva* 'एक एव जगन्नाथः कर्ता सर्वश्य सर्वगः | दुरात्मन्सर्वथा देवो भविष्यति न संशय ः ||'. When *Krishna* comes to know of *Paundraka's* audacious claim and his onslaught on *Dvaraka*, he returns and challenges *Paundraka*, the imposter replies that he alone is *Vasudeva* and will remain the sole *Vasudeva* after killing *Krishna* and destroying his weapons with his similar weapons - 'भो भो यादव गोपाल इदानीं क्व गतो भवान्|| त्वां द्रष्टुमद्य सम्प्राप्तो वासुदेवोऽस्मि साम्प्रतम्| हत्वा त्वा सबलं कृष्ण बलैर्बहुभिरन्विताः || अहमेको भविष्यामि वासुदेवो महीतले | यच्चक्रं तव गोविन्द प्रथितं सुप्रभं महत्|| अनेन मम चक्रेण पीडितोऽस्मि च तद्रणे | चक्रमस्तीति नद्वीर्यं तव माधव साम्प्रतम्||' (*Harivamsha*.100.27-29). *Krishna* tells him that his weapons are similar only in form and not in energy 'यत्ते चक्रं महाघोरमसुरान्तकरं मतह्| तत्तुल्यं तव चक्रं तु वृत्ततो न तु वीर्यतः | आयुधस्यैष्वय सर्वत्र शब्दसदृश्यमस्ति ते ||' (*ibid*.100.40).

When *Krishna* returns to *Mathura* he is welcomed by *Ugrasena* and others. *Jarasandha* and his associates like Shalva, Shishupal are not able to come to terms with *Krishna's* eminence. Therefore they decide to gather the ways and means of defeating *Krishna*. When they find all their attempts fail *Shalva* suggests that only *Kalayavan* can defeat *Krishna* and none other - 'स कालयवनो नाम अवध्यः केशवस्य ह |..कृष्णोऽपि बलवानेप माथुरे जातवानयम्| स जेष्यसि रणे कृष्णां मथुरायां समागतः ||' (*Harivamasha*).All agree to this suggestion but *Jarasandha* becomes momentarily unhappy seeing his claim as powerful warrior was being sidelined. Unhappy recalling earlier days when he was being approached for help and now he has to agree for others come to his help lamenting 'मां समाश्रित्य पूर्वस्मिन नृपा नृपभयार्दिताः | प्राप्नुवन्ति हत राज्य सभृत्यबलवाहनम्|| इह संचोद्यते भूपैः परसंश्रयहेतुना | कन्यव स्वपतिद्वेषादन्यं गतिपरायणा || अहो सुबलवद् दैवमशक्यं विनिवर्तितुम्| यदहं कृष्णमीतोऽन्यं संश्रयामि बलाधिकम्||'. Yet proud and arrogant, on his refusal to go himself, *Shalva* is sent as their emissary to *Kalayavana* who is only pleased to lead them. He surrounds *Mathura* with his massive army.

Harivamsha says that on return *Krishna* wisely and shrewdly decides that the time has come to emigrate from the ancient home land of his ancestors, even though he has gained success against *Jarasandha* and other adversaries. He tells them that *Mathura* has become a restricted place for the

increasing numbers of the communities. Therefore, feeling the place is not suitable for their stay any longer, he has decided to establish a new region for their stay and prosper. The inhabitants of *Mathura* wholeheartedly support this view, since they have not been able to defeat the adversaries for the last hundred years - 'इयं च मायुगी भूमिग्ल्द्रपा गम्य पग्स्य तु | वृद्धिश्चैव पगम्मकं वलतो मित्रम्तथा ||.. अत्र न गेचनं मह्यं निवामो मधुपुङ्गवः | पुरीं निवेशयिष्यामि मम नत्क्षन्तुमर्हथ ||..नमुचुर्यादवाः सर्वे हृष्टेन मनसा तदा | साध्यनां यदभिपेतं जनस्यास्य भवाय वै ||'.

When they observe *Kalayavana* approaching the *Mathura* with a great army, which was even difficult to be confronted than *Jarasandha's* armies, *Krishna* finding the time suitable for emigration leaves with all his people out of *Mathura* with their associate tribes 'नस्मिश्चैवान्तरे गज मकालयवनस्तदा | सैन्येन तदविधेनैव मथुगमभ्युपागमत्||.. ततो निश्चक्रमुः सर्वे यादवाः कृष्णशासनात् | ओघा इव ममुद्रस्य वलौघपतिनादिता ||. Then traveling westward they pass through the territories of *Kuru-Jangala, Panchala, Surasena along the river Yamuna, to Brahmavarta, Kurukshetra, Matsya* and *Sarasvata (possibly in Rajaputana), Marudhanva* finally reaching *Anarta (Saurashtra)* beyond *Suvira* and *Abhir, Krishna* comes across a red-coloured land, known as *Dvaravati*, surrounded by sands, which looked auspicious for the goddess of wealth, not far from *Raivataka* mountain, which he found suitable to establish his new township 'सागगनिलयसंवीतं सागगम्बुनिषेवितम्| विषय सिन्धुगजस्य शोभितं पुग्लक्षणैः || नैग्वतको नाम पर्वतो नातिदूरतः |..केशवेन मतिस्तत्र पुर्यर्थे विनिवेशिना | नाम्ना द्वाग्वती नाम म्वायतनाष्टापदोपमा ||' . Thus, says *Harivamsha*, even as *Yadavas* lived happily, *Krishna*, the killer of *Keshi*, did depart to *Dvaraka* knowing the arrival of *Kalayavana* and frightned of *Jarasandha* 'एवं द्वाग्वतीं चैव पुरीं प्राप्य मवान्धवाः | सुखिनो न्यवमन्गाजन् म्वर्गे देवगणाइव || कृष्णोऽपि कालयवनं ज्ञात्वा केशिनिपूदनः | जगसंधभयाच्चैव पुरीं द्वाग्वतिं ययौ ||'.

Establishing his tribes safely in *Dvaraka*, *Krishna* returns to *Mathura*, for confronting *Kalayavana* single handed. When *Kalayavana* seeing him approach rushes towards him, even as *Krishna* shrewdly runs taking *Kalayavana* farther and farther from *Mathura*, till he reaches the cave in which *Muchkunda*, a great sage was resting 'पदातिः पुरुषव्याघ्रो वाहाप्रहग्णम्तदा | आजगाम महावीर्यो मागं मधुसूदनः || नं दृष्ट्वा निर्ययौ हृष्टः म कालयवनो नृपा | पेक्षापूर्वं च कृष्णोऽपि निश्चकर्ष महाबलः ||' (*Harivamsha*). *Krishna* stands in one dark corner hidden 'शिग्स्थाने तु गजर्षेर्मुचुकुन्दस्य केशवः | संदर्शनपथं त्यक्त्वा तस्थौ बुद्धिमतां वरः ||'. When *Kalayavana* enters the cave he sees only an old man sleeping. Arrogantly he kicks him asking whether he has seen *Krishna* entering the cave. *Muchkunda* awakened suddenly and rudely sees *Kalayavana* in front and burns him with fire bursting out from his eyes, a boon which was given to him by *Indra*, when he had fought the *asuras* on behalf of the gods 'मुचकुन्दस्य गजर्षिः पादस्पर्शप्रबोधितः | निद्राच्छेदेन चुकोपधपादस्पर्शेन तेन च || संस्मृत्य स वरं शक्रादावैक्षत तमग्रतः | स दृष्टमात्रः कोधेन सम्प्रजज्वाल मर्वशः || ददाह पावकस्तं तु शुष्कं वृक्षमिवाशनिः | क्षणेन कालयवनं नेत्रतेजोविनिर्गतः ||'.

When *Muchakunda* becomes surprised at the unexpected event, *Krishna* informs him about his being boon in *Yadu* family and *Muchukunda* having killed his enemy whom he could not have killed even in hundred years. He tells him that he has been sleeping since *Krita yuga* and waking up now during the closing period of *Dvapara* and beginning of *Kali yuga*, having rested after fighting the battles for *Indra* earlier 'यदुवंशान्समुत्पन्नं वासुदेवात्मज विभो | वासुदेवं विजानीहि नृपते मामिहागतम्||..मम शत्रुस्त्वया दग्धो देवदत्तवरो नृप | अवध्यो यो मया संख्ये भवेद्वर्षशतैरपि ||'. *Harivamsha* records, after seeing *Kalayavana* dead, *Krishna* leaves for *Dvaraka* with the enormpus wealth and arms and armaments of his enemy, having fulfilled his purpose -'वासुदेवोऽपि धर्मात्मा उपायेन महामनाः | घतयित्वाऽऽत्मनः शत्रुं तत्सैन्यं पत्यपद्यत || प्रभूतरथहस्त्यश्ववर्मशस्त्रायुधध्वजम्| आदायोपययौ धीमान्स सैन्यं निहतेश्वरम || निवेदयामास ततो नराधिपं तदुग्रसेने प्रतिपूर्णमानसः | जनर्दनो द्वाग्वतीं च तां पुरीमशोभयत्तेन धनेन भूरिणा ||'.

Seeing *Yadavas* settled in the neighborhood in *Dvaraka*, *Kukudmi*, the king of *Anarta*, a descendent of *Ikshavaku*, gives his daughter *Revati* in marriage to *Balarama. Krishna* too soon marries *Rukmini*, the daughter of *Bhishmaka*, king of *Vidharbha and* brings her to *Dvaraka*, whereupon his marriage is celebrated according to tradition. Thereafter he lived happily as Indra lived with Puloma and Rama with Sita 'द्वाग्कां चापि सम्प्राप्ते गमे वृष्णिवलान्विते | रुक्मिण्याः केशवः पाणिं जग्राह विधिवत्प्रभुः || ततः मह तया रेमे पियया पीयमाणया | सीतमेव पुरा गमः पौलोम्येव पुरंदरः ||'. His marriage with *Rukmini* was disputed by her brother who had promised her hand to his friend *Shishupala*, the king of *Chedi. Krishna* however, defeats him intensifying the earlier enmity which *Shishupala* had against *Krishna. Krishna* marries eight other damsels, of whom

Satyabhama and *Jambavanti* were prominent. *Krishna's* marriage with sixteen thousand women became a poetic allegory of the surrender and culmination of communion. *Bhakti* of the *individual selves* to *Krishna* who is considered as *divine Self. Bhakti* is and culmination of communion with connotes As the ultimate symbol of devotion, humility, love, obedience, service and surrender, feminine gender is used to demonstrate the ultimate test of शरणागति. In later *Vaishnava* scriptures *Radha* became the ultimate symbol of loving soul. Therefore in essence it is said, 'स एव वासुदेवोऽसौ साक्षात्पुरुष उच्यते | स्त्रीप्रायं इतरत्सर्वं जगद्ब्रह्मपुरुष्यम्||'

Chapter II

Since early times *Pauravas* having been born to *Ila*, the sole daughter of *Svayambhuva Manu*, had dominated the region surrounded by river *Sarasvati* and *Drishdvati* and the adjacent lands. The *Pauravas* having descended in India crossing the difficult terrain of *Himalayas*, were not as rigid and inflexible as the *Bharatans* who had settled in the plains of the five rivers crossing over from the valleys of *Kandhara*. Marriages, though preferred from same stock, were not unusual from alien tribes inhabiting in the Himalayan range like *yakshas*, *apasaras*, *nishadas* and even *danavas*. While *Pururava* himself had married *Uravashi*, the legendary heavenly nymph, his son *Ayu* had married *Prabha*, the daughter of *danava* king *Svarabhanu*, his great grand son *Yayati* had married *Sharmistha*, the daughter of *danava* king *Vrishashripan*. In the post *vedic* era after *Dasarajnya* battle, when *Yayati's* five sons along with their associate *dasa-danava* associates were defeated by *Bharatas*, *Yayati* divided the kingdom among his sons, *Puru* ruling over the southern half of *Ganga-Yamuna* region, *Yadu* got the territories towards the south-west watered by the rivers *Chambal*, *Betwa* and *Ken*, *Turvasu* got the south-east region around *Rewa*, *Druhyu* was assigned the region west of *Yamuna* and north of *Chambal* and *Anu* receiving the portion of the area on the banks of *Ganga-Yamuna*. The division of the empire reduced influence of the *Puaravas*, till a later descendent *Kuru* establishing a kingdom with clear divisions as *Kurukshetra* (cultivated land) and *Kurujangala*, (the uncultivated land), *Hastinapura* established by *Hasti* becoming the traditional seat of the *Kauravas*. *Mahabharata* says that from *Yadu*, the *Yadavas* descended, *Kauravas* from *Puru*, from *Druhyu* the *Bhojas* whereas from *Turvasu* were born the *Yavanas* and from *Anu* the *Mlecchas*.

The malaise among *Kurus* seem to have started with *Shantanu*, who having earlier married celestial *Ganga*, the presiding deity over the river of the same name, was deserted giving birth to a son, *Devavrata*. In his old age he becomes attracted by the beauty of a fisher woman, *Matsyagandha* of an inferior *nishad* stock, which brought unhealthy mixture of gene in *Paurava* lineage. The shrewd and crafty fisherman not overawed by *Shantanu's* pedigree and seeing prospect for his daughter to be the queen of a great kingdom made demands resulting *Shantanu's* son, *Bhishma* giving up his rightful claim to the throne and the kingdom in favour of the children born out of the new marriage. The marriage was doomed to be a failure, with *Chitrangada* and *Vichitravirya*, both born out of this union, were not virile enough to be *Kshatriyas* either by the गुण or कर्म or continue the lineage. They did not succeed to have any progeny having died untimely death.

This was a challenge to *Bhishma's* ingenuity to find out a way to continue the lineage, since he himself had resolved not to marry but remain celibate. In spite of *Satyavatis's* encouragement to father the children, 'नयोगुत्पादयापत्यं संतानाय कुलस्य नः | मन्नियोगन्महावाहो धर्मं कर्तुमिहार्हसि ||', his resolves was not weakened. Instead he suggests continuance of the family through नियोग (lavirate) ceremony with *Dvaipayana Krishna*, who was also the child born to *Satyavati* through *Parashara muni*. But the events that passed did not end in any encouraging results in spite of the sage's impeccable character and attributes. *Dhritarashtra* was born blind, his mother *Ambika* having closed her eyes, when *Vyasa* came to her, recalling to her mind *Bhishma* and other *Kuru* ancestors and the terrible sight of his appearance - , 'साचन्नयत्तदा भीष्ममन्याण्श्च कुतुर्पङ्गवान्||..तस्य कृष्णस्य कपिलां जटां दीप्ते च लोचने | वभूणि चैव श्स्श्रूणि दृष्ट्वा देवी न्यमीलयस्त्||', *Pandu* was born with leukemia, his mother *Ambalika* having become white with fright seeing *Vyasa's*, 'अम्बालिकामथाभ्यागादृपि दृष्ट्वा च मापि तम्| विवर्णा पंडुसंकाशा समपद्यत भारत ||' and finally *Vidura* is born to a maid, his mother *Ambika's* having refused to go

to *Vyasa,* whom the same blesses that she would remain no more a slave but in her womb will be born a great son, who will be righteous and wise in wisdom 'उत्तिष्ठन्नब्रवीदेनामभुजिष्या भविष्यसि | अयं च ते शुभे गर्भः श्रेयानुदरमागतः ॰ धार्मात्माभविता लोके सर्वबुद्धिमतां वरः ||'.

The fatherless children, *Dhritarashtra, Pandu* and *Vidura* were reared and brought up by *Bhishma* with love and care. Though strong and powerful, *Dhritarashtra* being born blind was unfit to rule, *Vidura* though wise and righteous could not rule being born to a slave girl. Therefore, it was left to *Pandu,* though suffering from leucoderma was only who could ascend the throne, bringing wealth through wars and conquests with *Bhishma* by his side. With the family being resurgent, people said the daughters of the ruler of *Kashi* are indeed the mothers of great warriors, with *Bhishma* being supreme among the knower of righteousness, *Kruru-Jangala* a great nation, *Hastinapur* is a great city - 'वीरसूनां काशीसुते देशानां कुरुजाङ्गलम्| सर्वधर्मविदां भीष्मः पुराणं गजसाह्वयम्|| धृतराष्ट्रस्त्वचक्षुष्ट्वाद् राज्यं न प्रत्यपद्यत | पारशवत्वाद्विदुरो राजा पाण्डुर्बभूव ह ||'.

Bhishma, supremely qualified in ethical and moral principles 'सर्वनीतिमतां वरः', then broached the subject of marriage of *Pandu* and *Dhritarashtra* with *Vidura*, wise in righteousness - 'धर्मतत्त्वज्ञं' and whom Satyavati, *Bhishma* and *Vyasa* considered as the thread that binds the family. *Vidura* respectfully tells *Bhishma* that everyone revered him and his decision would surely be good for the family, 'भवान्पिता भवान्माता भवान्नः परमो गुरुः | तस्मात्स्वयं कुलस्यास्य विचार्य कुरु यद्धितम्||'. Accordingly *Pandu* marries *Kunti, Kunti Bhoja's* daughter, described as 'सत्वगुणोपेता धर्मारामा महाव्रता | दुहिता कुन्तिभोजस्य पृथा पृथुललोचना ||'. Thereafter *Pandu* marries *Madradesha* ruler's daughter *Madri*, known as 'श्रूयते भवतः साध्वी स्वसा माद्री यशस्विनी | तामहं वरयिष्यामि पाण्डोरर्थे यशस्विनीम्||'. Finally *Dhritarashtra* marrying *Gandhari* sister of *Shakuni,* who being shrewd and crafty saw in this alliance a great opportunity to shore up prosperity for his own benefit, 'गुणैः समुदितं सम्यगिदं नः प्रथितं कुलम्| अत्यन्यान्पृथिवीपालान्पृथिव्यामधिराज्यभाक्||' though the groom was blind and not likely to be the ruler. *Gandhari* accepted Dhritarashtra's blindness and decided to tie her eyes with a cloth and not to see things like him 'गान्धरी त्वथ शुश्राव धृतराष्ट्रमचक्षुषम्|..ततः सा पट्टमादाय कृत्वा बहुगुणं तदा | बबन्ध नेत्रे स्वे राजन्पतिव्रतपरायणा || नाभ्यसूया पतिमहमित्येवं कृतनिश्चयः |'.

Pandu was fond of hunting expedition, when he sees two animals mating each other, without being aware that they were sages. When he *kills* one of the animals, the other one curse that he too will die when making love to his wife. *Pandu* laments that one born in noble family performed improper actions under the influence of *Kama* 'सतामपि कुले जाताः कर्मणा बत दुर्गतिम्| प्राप्नुवन्त्यकृतात्मानः कामजालविमोहिताः ||'. Since then it was not possible for him to copulate, he tells *Kunti* and *Madri* to go back to *Hastinapur* and spend the rest of their lives in serving elders, sages, he himself preferring to live the life of an ascetic. Both the wives tell him he can live life of enunciate even while living as a householder other wise they would live no longer. *Pandu* accepts their desires and decides to live of an ascetic giving up food and pleasures. Once when sages tell him that it is desirable to have sons for continuation of the family, *Pandu* asks *Kunti* to seek children from the boon which she had received from *Durvasa. Kunti* thereafter conceives *Yudhishthira* from *Yama, Bhima* from *Vayu* and *Arjuna* from *Indra* and allows *Madri* to avail of the boon to have two sons *Nakula* and *Sahadeva* from *Ashvins* 'पाण्डोः कुन्त्यां च माद्रयां च पुत्राः पञ्च महारथाः | देवेभ्यः समपद्यन्त सन्तानाय कुलाय ||'. The sons born from illustrious fathers turn out to be epitome of righteousness and nobility.

It is said that *Gandhari* too became pregnant but while *Kunti* and *Madri* delivered their children, she did not do so even after lapse of two years. This made her unhappy and she started hitting her belly, whereupon a ball of flesh came to be delivered. Frightened she thought of destroying it, till *Vyasa* tells her not to worry since all that had to happen has happened therefore advised her to keep the ball of flesh in a pot and cool it. Thereafter two further years pass and from that pot was born *Duryodhana*, whereupon there was asses started braying, vultures, jackals and crows started great commotion. Strong winds blew and the entire surrounding became dry. *Dhritarashtra* becomes frightened 'यस्मिन्नहनि दुर्धर्षो जज्ञे दुर्योधनस्तदा ||..रासभारावसदृशं रुराव च ननाद च | तं खराः प्रत्यभाषन्त गृध्रगोमायुवायसाः || वाताश्च प्रववुश्चापि दिग्दाहश्चाभवत्तदा | ततस्तु भीतवद्राजा धृतराष्ट्रोऽब्रवीत् ||. Thereafter his other ninety nine sons are born and a daughter *Dushala* and another son, named *Yuyutsu*, born to the daughter of a *Vaishya. Dhritarashtra* is worried

about the future of his sons, since *Yudhsishthira* was born first in the family and therefore, will be natural contender to be crowned as future king. He asks *Vyasa* what would the position of his own son 'युधिष्ठिरो राजपुत्रो ज्येष्ठो नः कुलवर्धनः | प्राप्तः स्वगुणतो राज्यं न तस्मिन्वाच्यमस्ति नः || अयं त्वनन्तरस्तस्मादपि राजा भविष्यति | एतद्विवृत मे तथ्यं यदत्र भविता ध्रुवम्||'. Even as he completes his words, ferocious animals howl in unison, seeing which *Vidura* prophesizes that the omens suggest that *Duryodhana* would be the cause for destruction of the family. Therefore, he suggests that *Duryodhana* should be disowned so that future will be safeguarded, since in any case he has remaining ninety nine sons. Because it is better to disown one for welfare of the family and world, better to disown family for the town, the town for the nation, and for the self the entire worlds. While others endorse the suggestion, *Dhritarashtra* remains silent, being attached to his son 'यथेमानि निमित्तानि घोराणि मनुजाधिप | उत्थितानि सुते जाते ज्येष्ठे ते पुरुषर्षभ | व्यक्तं कुलान्तकरणो भवितैष सुतस्तव | तस्य शान्तिः परित्यागे गुप्तावपनयो महान्|| शतमेकोनमप्यस्तु पुत्राणां ते महीपते | त्यजैनमेकं शान्तिं चेत्कुलस्येच्छसि भारत || एकेन कुरु वै क्षेमं कुलस्य जगतस्तथा | त्यजेदेकं कुलस्यार्थे ग्रामस्यार्थे कुलं त्यजेत्|| ग्रामं जनपदस्यार्थे आत्मार्थे पृथिवीं त्यजेत्| स तदा विदुरेणोक्तस्तैश्च सर्वैर्द्विजोत्तमैः || न चकार तथा राजा पुत्रस्नेहसमन्वितः |'.

Here in the forest, living with *Kunti* and *Madri*, *Pandu* once looses control over himself and mates with *Madri,* resulting in his instant death. Feeling equally responsible, *Madri* chooses to follows him in death, becoming a *Sati* even as the assembled sages try to dissuade her saying that her step will engender welfare of her sons under *Dhritarashtra.* Besides, a pious lady should lead one's remaining life as celibate, controlling desires of body and heart, and bearing all sufferings and performing vows with restrained speech, which alone will liberate her and aid deliverance of her husband. - मृते भर्तरि या साध्वी ब्रह्मचर्यव्रते स्थिता | यमैश्च नियमैः श्रान्ता मनोवाक्कर्मजैः शुभैः | व्रतोपवासनियमैः कृच्छ्रैश्चान्द्रायणादिभिः | भूशय्यां क्षारलवणवर्जनं चैकभोजनम्|| येन केनापि विधिना देहशोषणतत्परा | देहपोशणसंयुक्ता विषयैर्हृतचेतना || देहव्ययेन नरकं महदाप्नोत्यसंशयः | तस्मात्संशोषयेद्देहं विषया नाशमाप्नुयुः || भर्तारं चिन्तयन्ती सा भर्तारं निस्तरेच्छुभा | तारितश्चापि भर्ता स्यादात्मा पुत्रस्तथैव च ||. But *Madri* declines the suggestion saying that *Kunti* is well qualified to see all the five *Pandavas* well, whereas she is not, therefore, it is proper for her to follow her husband in death 'कुन्ती समर्था पुत्राणा योगक्षेमस्य धारणे | अस्या हि न समा बुद्ध्या यद्यपि स्यादरुन्धती || कुन्त्याश्च वृष्णयो नाथाः कुन्तिभोजस्तथैव च | नाहं त्वमिव पुत्राणां समर्था धारणे तथा ||'. Thereafter, the sages accompanying *Kunti* and her sons to *Hastinapur* they report all that had happened. - 'पृथां च शरणं प्राप्तां पांडवांश्च यशस्विनः | यथावदनुगृह्णन्तु धर्मो ह्येष सनातनः ||'.

Bhishma and *Dhritarashtra* complete the श्राद्ध ceremonies, even as *Vyasa* arrives there and tells *Satyavati* that good and happy days are about to end, warning that earth has become degenerated and deceit and falsehood have raised their head, righteousness and fairplay will decline. The world will loose its luster even *Kauravas* would act unjustly and cruelly destroying the *Bharata* dynasty. Therefore, he tells his mother that it would be desirable for her to live in forests enjoining her own *self* with *divine essence* within. *Satyavati* accepts his advise and conveying her decision to *Bhishma*, leaves for the forests Thereafter, *Ambika* also accompanies her knowing well that the cause of the destruction of the family would be her grandsons. 'अतिक्रान्तसुखाः कालाः पर्युपस्थितदारुणाः | श्वः श्वः पापिष्ठदिवसाः पृथिवी गतयौवना || बहुमायासमाकीर्णो नानादोषसमाकुलः | लुप्तधर्मक्रियाचारो घोरः कालो भविष्यति || कुरूणामनयाच्चापि पृथिवी न भविष्यति | गच्छ त्वं योगमास्थाय युक्ता वस तपोवने ||'.

In *Hastinapura*, *Pandavas* grow up along with *Kauravas* under paternal care of *Bhishma* and *Vidura* who looked after their welfare and upbringing. They were trained the arts and skill in weapons under *Kripa* and *Drona.* Among the *Pandava* brothers, *Arjuna* was the favorite of *Drona*, *Bhima* being the impetuous one. *Bhima* took pleasure in teasing and tormenting his cousins and *Duryodhana* and *Dushasana* hating him among all the rest 'एवं स धार्तराष्ट्रांश्च स्पर्धमानो वृकोदरः | अप्रियेऽतिष्ठदत्यन्तं बाल्यान्न द्रोहचेतसा || ततो बलमतिख्यातं धार्तराष्ट्रः प्रतापवान्| भीमसेनस्य तज्ज्ञात्वा दुष्टभावमदर्शयत्||'. *Dhritarashtra's* sons were jealous of their prowess and progress and even poisoned *Bhima* and tried to drown him, though he survived every time, even from the nether worlds, acquiring in the process skill from the *nagas*. *Bhima* being short tempered would react to these attacks but *Yudhishthira* would always console and dissuade him. Cruel and *unrighteous* from their child hood *Kauravas* took every opportunity to harm their cousins.

The seeds of rivalry between them having sowed childhood *Kauravas* took every opportunity

to avenge their humiliation, which was to culminate the destruction of the family as envisaged by Vyasa, as natural to their गुण and स्वभव, because immediately after the funeral rites for *Pandu* were completed, when he had cautioned *Satyavati* to go to the forests saying that the seeds of destruction of the family have taken roots 'अतिक्रान्तसुखाः कालाः पर्युपस्थितदारुणाः | श्वः श्वः पापिष्ठदिवसाः पृथिवी गतयौवना || बहुमायासमाकीर्णो नानादोषसमाकुलः | लुप्तधर्मक्रियाचारो घोरः कालो भविष्यति || कुरूणामनयाच्चपि पृथिवी न भविष्यति | गच्छ त्वं योगमास्थाय युक्ता वस तपोवने ||'.

Bhagavat Purana narrates that after *Kunti* arrives in *Hastinapur* after *Pandu's* death, *Krishna* who at that time was still in *Mathura* being concerned of their welfare sends *Akrura* to *Hastinapur* 'स भवान्सुहृदां वै नः श्रेयाश्छेक्षर्यश्चिकीर्षया | जिज्ञासार्थं पाण्डवानां गच्छस्व त्वं गजस्वयम्|| पितर्युपरते बालाः सह मात्रा सुदुःखिताः | आनीताः स्वापुरं गज्ञा वसन्त इति शुश्रुम || तेषु गजाम्बिकापुत्रो भ्रातृपुत्रेषु दीनधीः | समो न वर्तते नूनं दुष्पुत्रवशगोऽन्धदृक्|| गच्छ जानीहि तद्वृत्तमधुना साध्वसाधु वा | विज्ञाय तद्विधास्यामो यथा शं सुहृदां भवेत्||'. There he meets *Dhritarashtra* along with *Bhishma*, *Vidura*, *Kunti*, *Drona*, *Kripa*, *Duryodhana*, *Karna*, *Ashvatthama* and others to inquire about the welfare of *Kunti* and her sons. At that time *Pritha* and *Vidura* tell him of all the evil deeds done by *Duryodhana* and others out of jealousy 'तेज ओजो बलं वीर्यं प्रश्रयादींश्च सद्गुणान्| प्रजानुरागं पार्थेषु न सहद्भिश्चिकीर्षितम्|| कृतं च धार्तराष्ट्रैर्यद्गरदानाद्यपेशलम्| आचख्यौ सर्वमेवास्मै पृथा विदुर एव च ||'.

***(Gita Press* Edition of *Mahabharata*, contradicts these events narrating that seeing that *Pandu* had departed to the forests fearing sage *Kindam's* curse, *Vasudeva* and others who were already at that time settled in *Dvaraka* become concerned with the welfare of *Kunti*, the daughter of *Kunti Bhoja* and education of her children. Therefore, *Vrishnis* send men of wisdom to teach the children in various arts, skill in arms and armaments so that they will; not remain with education and character** 'न भवेरन्क्रियाहीनाः पाण्डोः पुत्रा महायशः | पाण्डोः प्रियहितान्वेषी प्रेषय त्वं पुरोहितम्||'. ***Pandu* welcomes sage *Kashyapa* and others and praises *Vasudeva* for that action. Then he completes all the *samskaras* ending with the thread ceremony for the children and the children too became thereafter well-versed in *vedic* lore, soon flowered like lotus flowers turning well in their behaviour, -** 'ततः पाडुः क्रियाः सर्वाः पाण्डवानामकारयत्| गर्भाधानादिकृत्यानि चौलोपनयनानि च || काश्यपः कृतवान्सर्वमुपाकर्म च भारत |...वैदिकाध्ययनं सर्वे समपद्यन्तपारगाः |...ते च पत्रच शतं चैव कुरुवंशविवर्धनाः | सर्वे ववृधुरल्पेन कालेनाप्सिव नीरजाः ||'. **The inconsistency between these two narrations may possibly be either due to 1) the confusion in inserting the stanza in *Mahabharata* by later authors, or 2) because the writers of the two scriptures were different. This, however, is not the subject matter of this book, therefore is not further discussed.).**

When during their hunting expedition, *Pandavas* come across *Ekalavya* a *nishad* youth, seeing whose coarse appearance dogs bark, seeing which he stuffs their mouth with seven arrows. Surprised at this wonderful sight, *Drona* asks him to identify his teacher and comes to know that the boy had secretly learnt from none other than *Drona* himself, when he was teaching *Pandavas* and *Kauravas*. *Arjuna* becomes hurt and disappointed seeing *Ekalavya's* mastery over archery. He informs of the incident to *Drona* and asks him how it that Ekalavya is more is accomplished than him, whence he was assured that no one other than him would be supreme in the world. *Drona* goes to *Ekalavya* and asks his thumb as *Dakshina*, compensation for his training, 'त्वयाङ्गुष्ठो दक्षिणे दीयताम्'. Promptly *Ekalavya* cuts his thumb and presents it to him, 'हृष्टवदनस्तथैवादीनमानसः | छित्त्वाविचार्य त पाददद्रोणयाङ्गुष्ठमात्मनः ||'. This incident embarrasses *Drona* though it portrays the prevailing condition where non-*Aryas* and *Shudras* were looked down as uncouth savages, and chivalry and competence being restricted to the *Arya-Kshatriya* class.

Even as the training period was coming to an end, *Drona* arranges a gathering for displaying the skill acquired by his disciples, when a great event takes place which was to transform the destiny of the *Kuru* family in the years to come. The disciples perform their skills, *Pandavas* surpassing the *Kauravas* in their skill. *Dhritarashtra* expresses his satisfaction now that he is being protected by *Kunti's* illustrious sons, 'धन्योऽस्म्यनुगृहीतोऽस्मि रक्षितोऽस्मि महामते | पृथारणिसमद्भूतैस्त्रिभिः पान्डववह्निभिः ||. Even as others were sharing his joy and *Drona* was sitting with the *Pandavas* luminous like moon, 'पञ्चभिभ्रातृभिः पार्थैद्रोणः परिवृतो बभौ | पञ्चतारेण संयुक्तः सावित्रेणेव चन्द्रमाः ||', *Karna* enters shining with his armour and ear-rings endowed at his birth

and bow, arrows and sword and offering obeisance to *Drona* and *Kripa,* expresses his desire to challenge *Arjuna* saying that he need not be proud, since he will perform all the difficult deeds which he had performed. Hearing this audacious declaration, *Duryodhana* became happy and for a moment *Arjuna* was taken aback soon becoming filled with anger. Then taking permission from *Drona* he performed all those deeds which *Arjuna* had performed earlier.

Duryodhana extremely pleased seeing a potential challenger to *Arjuna's* skill, welcomed *Karna* with born arms to be friendly with them, whereas Arjuna feeling humiliated addressed *Karna* remarking that an uninvited guest and speaker are not respected in life. Therefore, he should live rest of his life after being defeated by him 'आनहूतोपसृष्टानामनाहूतोपजल्पिनाम | ये लोकास्तान्हतः कर्ण मया त्वं प्रतिपत्स्यसे ||'. A proud *Karna* replies angrily saying, this field is common for all, why does he then object; strength and valor follow royalty even as righteousness follows valour. Therefore complaining is the sign of weakness, therefore replay with arrows, 'गङ्गांऽयं सर्वसामान्यः किमत्र तव फाल्गुन | वीर्यश्रेष्ठाश्च गाजानां वलं धर्मोनुवर्तते || किं क्षेपैर्दुर्वलायासैः शरैः कथय भाग्त |'. Hearing these brave words spoken by *Karna*, *Kauravas* embrace him with enthusiasm. Entire gathering became divided in two camps. Seeing the unseemly confrontation between the two, *Kunti* who had recognized her long-lost son faints 'कुन्तिभोजसुता मोहं विज्ञातार्था जगाम ह |' but recovering saw her two sons gettaing to ready to fight with each other.

Seeing the commotion, *Kripacharya* declares that *Arjuna* is a *Kshatriya* and the son of *Kunti* and will fight duel with him only when he identify the family in which he is born because only one born a prince can fight with another similarly born 'अयं पृथायास्तनयः कनीयान्पाण्डुनन्दनः | कौग्वो भवता सार्धं द्वन्द्वयुद्धं करिष्यति || त्वमप्येयं महावाहो मातरं पितरं कुलम्| कथयस्व नरेन्द्राणां त्वं कुलभूषणम्|| ततो विदित्वा पार्थस्त्वां प्रतियोत्स्यति वा न वा | वृथाकुलसमाचारैर्न युध्यन्ते नृपात्मजाः ||' Hearing these cruel words, *Karna* became muted and remained silent, bowing his head steps aside 'एवमुक्तस्य कर्णस्य व्रीडावनातमाननम्| वभौ वर्षाम्वुविक्लिन्नं पद्ममागलितं यथा ||'. *Duryodhana* reminded his teacher that a King has three wombs, noble family, a brave one and a leader of an army. Therefore, if *Arjuna* cannot fight any one other than a king, then he proposes to bestow *Karna* with kingdom of *Anga* region. *Karna* becomes overwhelmed with the honour bestowed on him and asks *Duryodhana* how can he repay the debt, whereupon the *Kauravas* says, through life-long friendship 'अस्य गज्यप्रदानस्य मदृशं किं ददानि ते || प्रव्रूहि गजशार्दूल कर्ता ह्यस्मि तथा नृप | अत्यन्तं सख्यमिच्छामीत्याह तं स सुयोधन ||'. From that moment onwards *Duryodhana* and *Karna* begin their unstinted friendship and *Arjuna* and *Karna's* rivalry becomes firmly established.

Seeing his son being crowned, *Karna's* foster father, the charioteer comes to him and *Karna* bows down to him with love and respect. Seeing this and realizing that *Karna* is the son of a charioteer, *Bhima* derisively laughs at him saying, that he is not even deserve to be killed by *Arjuna*. You should take hold of a whip, which befits the family in which he is born. Like the dog which can not hope to have the oblation placed in a sacrifice, he does not deserve to the ruler of *Anga* 'न त्वमर्हसि पार्थेन सूतपुत्र रणे वधम्| कुलस्य सदृशस्तूर्णं प्रतोदो गृह्यतां त्वया || अङ्गराज्यं च नार्हस्त्वामुपभोक्तुं नराधम | श्वा हुताशसमीपस्थं पुरोडाशमिवाध्वारे ||'. *Bhima's* audacious speech infuriates *Duryodhana* and he bursts out like forest fire saying, for *Kshatriya* valor alone is the distinctive identity making them fit for companionship, being difficult to find origin of the rivers and warriors. *Agni* was born of water, terrible thunderbolt which annihilated the *asuras* was created from *Dadhichi's* bones, many *Brahmins* born to *Kshatriyas*, *Vishvamitra* born to a *Kshatriya* became a *Brahmin*; *Drona* was born in a vessel and every one knows how *Pandavas* were all born. How could then one endowed with divine armour and ear-rings at birth be born as a son to a woman of low caste. Cam an antelope give birth to a tiger? *Karna* is qualified to be the king not only of the *Anga* region but also of the whole world 'क्षत्रियाणां वलं ज्यैष्ठंयोद्धव्यंक्षत्रबन्धना | शूराणां च नदीनां च दुर्विदाः प्रभवाः किल ||...क्षत्रियेभ्यश्च ये जाता ब्राह्मणास्ते च तेश्रुताः | विश्वामित्रप्रभृतयः प्राप्ता ब्रह्मत्वमव्ययम्|| आचार्यः कलशाज्जातो द्रोणः शस्त्रभृतांवरः |..भवतां च यथा जन्म तदप्यागमितं मया | सकुण्डलं सकावचं सर्व लक्षणलक्षितम्| कथमादित्यसदृशं मृगी व्याघ्रं जनिष्यति ||...पृथिवीराज्यमर्होऽयं नाङ्गराज्यं नरेश्वरः | अनेन वाहुवीर्येण मया चाज्ञानुवर्तिना ||'.

Dhritarashtra had always nursed injury for being denied kingship in the first place. He could become a king only when *Pandu* died. Thus his claim was by default and not by right therefore, he was

keen to see that his son *Duryodhana* would eventually succeed him on the throne. Therefore, *Kunti's* presence in *Hastinapura* with her sons was seen by him as unnecessary interference. Though he did not show any undue liking from them, he did not like his sons show any hatred towards them. Therefore, he saw *Karna* as a strong adversary to *Arjuna* and a possible powerful supporter of his sons.

At the end of the training, *Drona* asks his disciples to give him as fee गुरु दक्षिणा, taking *Drupada* as prisoner and bringing him to his presence 'पञ्चालराजं द्रुपदं गृहीत्वा रणमूर्धनि | पर्यानयत भद्रं वः सा स्यात्परमदक्षिणा ||'. *Pandavas* and *Kauravas* go and bring *Drupada*. *Drona* pardons him, reminding him his earlier statement that one who is not a king cannot be a friend of a king, therefore asks him to hand over half of his kingdom keeping the other half for himself, so that he can have his friendship as one equal 'अराजा किल नो राज्ञः सखा भवितुमर्हसि | अतः प्रयतितं राज्यं यज्ञसेन मया तव ||'. *Drupada* readily agrees saying it is not surprising a *Brahmin* and great warrior like him should b so well-disposed 'अनाश्चर्यमिदं ब्रह्मन् विक्रान्तेषु महात्मसु | प्रीये त्वयाहं त्वत्तश्च प्रीतिमिच्छामि शाश्वतीम्||' .

Earlier *Bhishma* was unwilling and *Dhritarashtra* being blind could not become the ruler King - 'प्रज्ञाचक्षुरचक्षुष्ट्वाद्धृतराष्ट्रो जनेश्वरः | राज्यं न प्राप्तवान्पूर्वं स कथं नृपतिर्भवेत्|| तथा शांतनवो भीष्मः सत्यसंधो महाव्रतः | प्रत्याख्याय पुरा राज्यं न स जातु ग्रहीष्यति ||. Even then people looked up to *Yudhishthira*, being young, truthful, noble, and respectful to the elders as the ideal to be their ruler in due course - 'गुणैः समुदितान्दृष्ट्वा पौराः पाण्डुसुतांस्तदा | कथयांचक्रिरे तेषां गुणान्संसत्सु भारत || राज्यप्राप्तिं च संप्राप्तं ज्येष्ठं पाण्डुसुतं तदा | कथयन्ति स्म संभूय चत्वरेषु सभासु च ||. On the other hand, *Duryodhana* was disgruntled and disappointed by the turn of events and always held his father for his claim being overlooked for ever in preference to *Yudhishthira* - 'पितृतः प्राप्तवान् राज्य पाण्डुरात्मगुणैः पुरा | त्वमन्धगुणसंयोगात्प्राप्तं राज्यं न लब्धवान्|| स एष पाण्डोर्दायाद्यं यदि प्राप्नोति पाण्डवः | तस्य पुत्रो ध्रुवं प्राप्तस्तस्य तस्यापि चापरः ||..यदि त्व हि पुरा राजन्निद राज्यमवाप्तवान्| ध्रुवं प्राप्स्याम च वयं राज्यमप्यवशे जने ||'. Therefore, he suggests his father to send *Pandavas* far off to *Varanavat*, so that they *Kauravas* may not face any immediate danger from them - 'पाण्डवेभ्यो भयं न स्यात्तानविवासयता भवान्| निपुणेनाभ्युपायेन नगरं वारणावतम्||'.

Dhritarashtra then comes out his feelings which he was not able to give voice till then. Besides, *Bhishma*, *Drona*, *Vidura* and *Kipacharya* would also not have agreed with his feelings. 'दुर्योधन ममाप्येतद्धृदि संपरिवर्तते | अभिप्रायस्य पापत्वान्नैवं तु विवृणोम्यहम्| न च भीष्मो न च द्रोणो न च क्षत्ता न गौतमः | विवास्यमानान्कौन्तेयाननुमंस्यन्ति कर्हिचित्||'. But *Duryodhana* argued that elders would not have objected since *Bhishma* would be neutral, *Ashvatthama* being devoted to himself, *Drona* following his son, *Kripa* similarly aligning - 'दुर्योधन ममाप्येतद्धृदि संपरिवर्तते | अभिप्रायस्य पापत्वान्नैवं तु विवृणोम्यहम्| न च भीष्मो न च द्रोणो न च क्षत्ता न गौतमः | विवास्यमानान्कौन्तेयाननुमंस्यन्ति कर्हिचित्||. Therefore, *Dhritarashtra* agrees to send *Pandavas* along with their mother to *Varanavata*, because their presence in *Hastinapura* was harming the interest of his sons. *Dhritarashtra* broaches the subject with *Yudhishthira* who agrees knowing that there was no other alternative course for them. Only *Vidura* was not pleased, having heard that house of wax is being constructed for their stay. He was wise one and knew alien languages which were incomprehensible to others. Yudhishthira too likewise knew these alien languages. Therefore, he advised *Yudhishthira* in the incomprehensible language to be careful of *Duryodhana's* intention. A wise one knowing the moral injunctions take steps to protect oneself from danger. There exists one such weapon which is not prepared of iron but will even then destroy a body. Those who know this will take every care to protect oneself from that. A blind one who does not know the way, or the quarters is bound to lose confidence, without being wise. Therefore understand these words carefully. Thus informed by wise *Vidura*, *Yudhishthira* acknowledge that he has understood his intent - 'प्राज्ञः प्राज्ञप्रलापज्ञः प्रलापज्ञमिदं वचः | प्राज्ञं प्राज्ञः प्रलापज्ञः प्रलापज्ञं वचोऽब्रवीत्|| यो जानाति परप्रज्ञां नीतिशास्त्रानुसारिणीम्| विज्ञायेह तथा कुर्यादापदं निस्तरेद्यथा || अलोहं निशितं शस्त्रं शरीरपरिकर्तनम्| यो वेत्ति न तु तं घ्नन्ति प्रतिघातविदं द्विषः ||..नाचक्षुर्वेत्ति पन्थानं नाचक्षुर्विन्दते दिशः | नाधृतिर्बुद्धिमाप्नोति बुध्यस्वैवं प्रबोधितः || अनाप्तैर्दत्तमादत्ते नरः शस्त्रमलोहजम्| श्वाविच्छरणमासाद्य प्रमुच्येत हुताशनात्|| एवमुक्तः प्रत्युवाच धर्मराजो युधिष्ठिरः | विदुरं विदुषां श्रेष्ठ ज्ञानमित्येव पाण्डवः || '. *Kunti* curious of the advice given by *Vidura* inquires of her son what his uncle had told him in language which was unintelligent to others. He replies that he has warned him that one who restrains his senses is saved from all dangers and he had replied that he has understood his advice.

Later *Vidura* helps them in getting an underground passage from the house to escape safely from the danger. When the house of wax was set to fire, *Pandavas* escape through the underground passage. Even as people at large assume that they died in that conflagration and *Dhritarashtra* laments their death and arranges to perform the funeral ceremonies, *Vidura* seeing that *Bhishma* too was offering oblation to the departed souls, he quietly takes him aside and informs in confidence that they are safe living *in cognito* having escaped from the fire.

During their travels *Pandavas* wander from place to place, *Bhima* fretting and fuming to see his mother and brothers suffering. In the course of their travels, *Bhima* kills *Hidimb*, a terrible *rakshasaa* and marries *Hidimba*, his sister and begets a son *Ghatotkacha* from her. Thereafter, they go to a small town, *Ekachakra* where *Bhima* saves a *Brahmin's* family by killing *Bakasura* and delivering them from the menace. In *Ekachakra* they come across *Brahmins* who were on their way to *Panchala* to witness *Drupada's* daughter *Draupadi's* स्वयंवर ceremony and be benefited by gifts given. *Pandava* brothers accompany them dressed similarly as Brahmins.

Drupada, King of *Panchala* after he was defeated by *Drona* with the help of his disciples, *had* performed a great sacrifice for having a son capable of avenging the defeat. From that sacrifice raises *Drishtadhyumna* of terrible visage like *Agni* roaring repeatedly, of incomparable valour and shining armour, sword, bow and arrows an ethereal voice announcing that the child is born to kill *Drona* and bring happiness to the family 'भयापहो राजपुत्रः पाञ्चालानां यशस्करः || राज्ञः शोकपहो जात एव द्रोणवधाय वै |'. Soon thereafter from the sacrificial fire comes out a beautiful female child, dark in complexion, with eyes large and of indescribable charm and beauty. She was well-endowed with all auspicious qualities as if *Durga* herself has come in human form, 'मानुषं विग्रहं कृत्वा साक्षादमरवर्णिणी.. कुमारी चापि पाञ्चाली वेदिमध्यात्समुत्थिता | सुभगा दर्शनीयाङ्गी स्वसितायतलोचना ||'. The ethereal voice also declares that she will be destroyer of *Kshatriyas* in fulfillment of *divine* intent and purpose. She was named *Krishna* being born dark in colour 'सर्वयोषिद्वरा कृष्णा विनीपुः क्षत्रियान्क्षयम्|| सुरकार्यमियं काले करिष्यति सुमध्यमा |..कृष्णेत्येयाब्रुवन्कृष्णां कृष्णाभूत्सा हि वर्णतः |'.

It was *Drupada'* desire that his daughter should marry *Arjuna* but was saddened when he heard *Arjuna's* untimely death in fire. Therefore, with great reluctance he arranges for her स्वयंवर when she comes of age, his *Guru* consoling him that '*O King great human souls do not come to an end in this manner. I am sure they are alive. Announce Draupai's स्वयंवर and Arjuna will certainly be present at that time*'. Accordingly *Drupada*, hoping against hope and that only a great archer like *Arjuna* would be able to win his daughter in a difficult contest announces stiff condition that whoever shoots the circling fish through the hole in the wheel, him will his daughter marry.

Many kings from different parts assemble in *Drupads's* court aspiring *Draupadi's* hand. *Kauravas* come with *Karna, Jarasandha and Shishupala*, similarly *Virata, Rukmangada* and many others. *Krishna* too comes accompanied by *Balarama*, *Aniruddha, Samaba, Pradymana, Gada, Satyaki, Akrura Pradyumna* and *Samba* 'हलयुधस्तत्र जनार्दनश्च वृष्ण्यन्धकाश्चैव यथाप्रधानम्| प्रेक्षां स्म चक्रुर्यदुपुङ्गवास्ते स्थिताश्च कृष्णस्य मते महान्तः ||' but unlike other who had gathered seized by *Draupadi's* beauty 'कन्दर्पबाणाभिनिपीडिताङ्ग कृष्णागतैस्ते हृदयहार्नरेन्द्राः'. *Krishna* appeared to have come in search *Pandava* brothers and was pleased recognizing them in the garb of *Brahmins* and smeared with ash but entering the स्वयंवर hall with strides like those of proud tuskers - 'दृष्ट्वा तु तान्मत्तगजेन्द्ररूपान्पञ्चाभिपद्मानिव वारणेन्द्रान्| भस्मावृताङ्गानिव हव्यवाहान्कृष्णः प्रदध्यौ यदुवीरमुख्याः ||'. Assembled people did not recognize them as they were only seeing *Draupadi* with unblinking eyes - 'अन्ये तु वीरा नृपपुत्रपौत्राः कृष्णागतैर्नेत्रमनःस्वभावैः व्यायच्छमाना ददृशुर्न तान्वै |'. *Krishna* points out each of them to *Balarama* sitting by his side 'दृष्ट्वा तु तान्मत्तगजेन्द्ररूपान्पञ्चाभिपद्मानिव वारणेन्द्रान्| भस्मावृताङ्गानिव हव्यवाहान्कृष्णः प्रदध्यौ यदुवीरमुख्यः || शशंस रामाय युधिष्ठिरं स भीमं सजिष्णुं च यमौ च वीरौ | शनैः शनैस्तान्प्रसमीक्ष्य रामो जनार्दनं प्रीतमना ददर्श ह ||'.

When the ceremony begins one after another king comes and picks up the bow but seeing it impossible to lift withdraw from the contest. It is only then *Karna* walks towards the bow and fixes the arrows that every one including *Pandavas* expect him to shoot the bird with success - 'दृष्ट्वा सूत मेनिरे पाण्डुपुत्रा

भित्वा नीतं लक्ष्यवरं धरायाम्| धनुर्धरा रागकृतप्रतिज्ञमत्यग्निसोमार्कमथार्कपुत्रम्||', Seeing *Karna*, however, *Draupadi* protests loudly declaring that she will not marry the son of a *Suta* 'दृष्ट्वा तु तं द्रौपदी वाक्यमुच्चैर्जगाद नाहं वरयामि सूतम्|'. This was one more occasion when *Karna* had to withdraw from a contest. He lifts his eyes sadly heavenward to *Surya* and withdraws with embarrassed smile 'सामर्षहासं प्रसमीक्ष्य सूर्यं तत्याज कर्णः स्फुरितं धनुस्तत्||'. Even *Shishupala* fails in his attempt, sinking on the ground and *Jarasandha* leaving the hall disappointed. No one was bold thereafter to make any attempt. Even, *Shalya* and *Duryodhana* fail in their attempts and withdraw. Seeing others fail, *Duryodhana* rises from his seat towards the bow and with a look at beautiful *Draupadi* he lifts it easily. Even as he was fixing the arrow to the string, he cuts his fingure losing the grip on the bow.. Feeling humiliated he goes back to his seat.

Seeing this *Krishna* presses *Balarama's* hands with great pleasure knowing fully well only Arjuna will succeed 'ततो वरिष्ठः सुरदानवानामुदारधीर्वृष्णिकुलप्रवीरः | जहर्ष रामेण स पीड्य हस्तं हस्तं गतां पाण्डुसुतस्य मत्वा || न जज्ञुरन्ये नृपवीरमुख्याः संछन्नरूपानथ पाण्डुपुत्रान्||'. Then seeing no one else is coming forward, *Arjuna* rose up from the group where *Brahmins* were sitting. Encouraged by them, he walks across to the surprise of *Kshatriyas* and pleasure of the *Brahmins*. He stands for a moment like unshakable mountain with his head bowed in respect. Then offering obeisance to *Shiva Arjuna* he invokes *Krishna* mentally and lifts the bow and fixing the arrow and his gaze on the object shot the bird easily shattering the mechanism 'अर्जुनो धनुषोऽभ्याशे तस्थौ गिरिरिवाचलः | स तद्धनुः परिक्रम्य प्रदक्षिणमथाकरोत्|| प्रणम्य शिरसा देवमीशानं वरदं प्रभुम्| कृष्णं च मनसा कृत्वा जगृहे चार्जुनो धनुः ||...विव्याध लक्ष्यं निपपात तच्च छिद्रेण भूमौ सहसातिविद्धम्|'.

The assembled *Kshatriya* warriors however feel slighted to see a *Brahmin* succeed when *Kshatriyas* like *Rukmi, Duryodhana, Karna, Shalya, Shishupala and Jarasandha* failed. Feeling cheated and humiliated, they lead by *Karna* rush towards *Drupad* to attack him, which *Arjuna* and *Bhima* intervene and repulse. Seeing the incredible deed being performed by them, *Krishna* confides in *Balarama* that they are surely no one else than *Arjuna* and *Bhima* as sure as they themselves are *Sankarshana* and *Vasudeva* 'य एष सिंहर्षभखेलगामी महद्धनुः कर्षति तालमात्रम्| एषोऽर्जुनो नात्र विचार्यमस्ति यद्यस्मि संकर्षण वासुदेवः ||'. *Balarama* expresses his satisfaction that their aunt's sons are not dead in the conflagration but alive is safe - 'तमब्रवीन्निर्जलतोयदाभो हलायुधोऽनन्तरजं प्रतीतः | प्रीतोऽस्मि दृष्ट्वा हि पितृष्वसारं पृथां विमुक्तां सह कौरवाग्र्यैः ||'. Impressed by the incredible his brave deeds they praise *Arjuna's* courage. *Karma* surprised at the incredible valour, becomes speechless with admiration saying that he must either be *Parashurama* or *Indra* or *Vishnu* himself, because except for *Arjuna* no one would have dared to fight with him like this 'किं त्वं साक्षाद्धनुर्वेदो रामो वा विप्रसत्तम | अथ साक्षाद्धरिहयः साक्षाद्वा विष्णुरच्युतः ||.. न हि मामाहवे क्रुद्धमन्यः साक्षाच्छचीपतेः | पुमान् योधयितुं शक्तः पाण्डवाद्वा किरीटिनः ||'. *Arjuna* replies that he is neither *Parashurama* nor well-versed in archery but only a *Brahmin* who is supreme among all warriors. Through the grace of his teacher he stands accomplished in *Brahmastra* and *Indrastra* 'नास्मि कर्ण धनुर्वेदो नास्मि रामः प्रतापवान्|| ब्राह्मणोऽस्मि युधां श्रेष्ठः सर्वशस्त्रभृतां वर | ब्राह्मे पौरंदरे चास्त्रे निष्ठितो गुरुशासनात्||. Seeing that he is *Brahmin, Karma* too withdraws from the fight.

Drupada is thrilled to see the great feet accomplished by an unknown *Brahmins* and accepting the event as divinely ordained gives *Draupadi's* hand to Arjuna. Then accompanied by *Draupadi*, the *Pandavas* go to their mother *Kunti* and declare that they have brought a gift for her. Without realizing nature of the gift, she tells them them to share it equally, resulting *Draupadi* married to all the five brothers. Though *Kunti* regrets her words, she accepts the same as divinely ordained. *Krishna* and *Balarama* decide to visit their aunt *Kunti* whom they find sitting around her sons and *Draupadi*. *Krishna* introduces himself saying '*I am Vasudeva*' and bows to her and *Yudhishthira* and *Balarama* too follows 'कृष्णोऽहमस्मीति निपीड्य पादौ युधिष्ठिरस्याजमीढस्य राज्ञः || तथैव तस्याप्यनु रौहिणेयस्तौ चापि हृष्टाः कुरवोऽभ्यनन्दन्| पितृष्वसुश्चापि यदुप्रवीरावगृह्णतां भारतमुख्य पादौ ||'. Then *Yudhishthira* inquires their welfare and relates their own life, asking him further they were found out by him when they were living *in cognito*. *Krishna* responds smilingly that he is aware of all the events, declaring that he recognized them since fire cannot be hidden under a bush. He is happy that they are safe, *Kauravas* having failed in their attempt-'तमब्रवीद्वासुदेवः प्रहस्य गूढोऽप्यग्निर्ज्ञायत एव राजन्| तं विक्रमं

पाण्डवेयानतीत्य कोऽन्यः कर्ता विद्यते मानुषेषु ||'. Wishing them good fortune and assuring his support, *Krishna* departs with *Balarama,* lest they be recognized and found. 'दिष्ट्या मर्वे पावकाद्विप्रमुक्ता यूयं घोरात्पाण्डवाः शत्रुसाहाः | दिष्ट्या पापो धृतराष्ट्रस्य पुत्रः सहामात्यो न सकामोऽभिविष्यन्|| भद्रं वोऽस्तु निहितं यद् गुहायां विवर्धध्वं ज्वालना इवैधमानाः | मा वो विदुः पार्थिवाः केचिदेव यास्यावहे शिबिरायैव तावत्|| सोऽनुज्ञातः पाण्डवेनाव्ययश्रीः प्रायाच्छीघ्रं बलदेवेन सार्धम्||'.

Drishtadhyumna had followed the trail to know the identity of the *Brahmins* and is surprised and happy to know that they are none other than *Pandavas* in hiding. Rushing back he gives him the glad tidings to his father that his desire to give *Draupadi* in marriage to *Arjuna* is fulfilled by the gods. *Drupada* is thrilled to know the glad tidings. Feeling doubly blessed *Drupada* goes to them and invites them to his palace, honouring each of them with love and affection. *Drupada*, however continues to have one reservation saying that it is known that king can have many wives, but it is nowhere heard that one woman can have many husbands, 'एकस्य बह्व्यो विहिता महिष्यः कुरुनन्दन | नैकस्या बहवःपुमः श्रूयन्ते पतयः क्वचित्||'. *Yudhishthira* replies that धर्म is difficult to understand in its depth. But they have been following the ancient rule. Mother *Kunrti* has spoke to them that she should b shared by all the brothers and he feels that it would be proper to follow her instruction, without having thinking twice on that matter 'सूक्ष्मो धर्मो महाराज नास्य विद्मो वयं गतिम्| पूर्वेषामानुपूर्व्येण यातं वर्त्मानुयामहे || न मे वागानृतं प्राह नाधर्मे धीयते मतिः | एवं चैव वदत्यम्बा मम चैतन्मनोगतम्|| एष धर्मो ध्रुवो राजंश्चरैनमविचारयन्| मा च शङ्का तत्र स्यात्कथंचिदपि पार्थिव ||'.

Finally *Drupada* agrees accepting the event as divinely ordained gives *Draupadi's* hand to *Arjuna Draupadi* places the garland around his neck, blesses *Draupadi* in what could be an ideal benediction for a newly married bride to be dear unto *Pandavas* as *Indrani* was to *Indra*, *Svaha* to *Agni*, *Rohini* to *Moon*, *Damayanti* to *Nala*,, *Bhadra* to *Kuber*, *Arundhati* to *Vashishtha*, *Lakshmi* to *Narayana;* be a noble lady possessed of innumerable pleasures being wealthy with long living progeny; enjoying all pleasures, remain ever associated with husbands in their enterprise and performance of actions, remaining ever devoted to then; be respectful to the guests, sages, old and the young and *Gurus* during rest of the life in honouring those who come to the dwelling place, 'यथेन्द्राणि हरिहये स्वाहा चैव विभवसौ | रोहिणी च यथा सोमे दमयन्ति यथा नले || यथावैश्रवणं भद्रा वसिष्ठे चाप्यरुन्धती | यथा नारायणे लक्ष्मीस्तथा त्वं भव भर्तुषु || जीव सूर्वीरसूभद्रे भोगसम्पन्ना यज्ञपत्नी पतिव्रता || अतिथीनागतान्साधून्वृद्धान्बालास्तथा गुरून्| पूजयन्त्या यथान्यायं शश्वद्गच्छन्तु ते समाः ||...पृथिव्यां यानि रत्नानि गुणवन्ति गुणान्विते | तान्याप्नुहि त्वं कल्यानि सुखिनी शरदां शतम्| यथा च स्वभिनन्दामि वध्वद्य क्षौमसंवृताम्| तथा भूयोऽभिनंदिष्ये जातपुत्रां गुणान्विताम्||'.

When *Kauravas* come to know that the *Brahmin* who won *Draupadi* was none other than *Arjuna* and the one who defeated *Shalya* and others was *Bhima,* the assembled Kings were surprised and blamed *Dhritarashtra* and *Bhishma* for all the troubles which they had to go through. While *Shakini* and others continued to think ill of *Pandavas*, *Dushasana* remarked to *Duryodhana* that if Arjuna had not come dressed as *Brahmin*, he would not have won <u>*Draupadi*</u>*.* All their efforts have failed, *divine will* alone being supreme 'यद्यसौ ब्राह्मणो न स्याद्विन्देत द्रौपदी न सः | न हि तं तत्त्वतो राजन्वेद कश्चिद्धनंजयम्|| दैवं च परमं मन्ये पौरुषं चाप्यनर्थकम्| धिगस्तु पौरुषं तान ध्रियन्ते यत्र पाण्डवाः ||'. Then blaming *Purochana* who was assigned the job of destroying them in fire, they all return to *Hastinapura.*

When *Vidura* comes to know the glad tidings, he goes to *Dhritarashtra* and informs him suggestively that there has not been any depletion in *Kuru* dynasty. Blinded by his attachment to his son, *Dhritarashtra* exults thinking that *Duryodhana* has won *Draupadi's* hand 'अब्रवीत्परमप्रीतो दिष्ट्या दिष्ट्येति भारत || मन्यते स वृत्तं पुत्रं ज्येष्ठं द्रुपदकन्यया | दुर्योधनमविज्ञानात्प्रज्ञाचक्षुर्नरेश्वरः ||'. When feeling embarrassed, *Vidura* corrects him saying that it is *Pandavas* who have married *Draupadi* in स्वयंवर, *Dhritarashtra's* expression changes and shrewdly concealing his feeling he says it equally fortunate, 'आकारच्छादनार्थं तु दिष्ट्या दिष्ट्येति चाब्रवीत्||' *Pandavas* being dear to him as his own sons are or even more so 'आकारच्छादनार्थं तु दिष्ट्या दिष्ट्येति चाब्रवीत्||.. यथैव पाण्डोः पुत्रास्तु यथैवाभ्यधिका मम | यथा चाभ्यधिका बुद्धिर्मम नान्पति तच्छृणु ||'. *Vidura* departs advising *Dhritarashtra* to be favourably inclined towards *Pandavas* 'नित्यं भवतु ते बुद्धिरेषा राजञ्छतं समाः |'. But when *Duryodhana* hears his father's reaction, he protests, *Dhritarashtra* sheepishly telling him that he spoke good things about *Pandavas* because *Vidura* was present at that time, other wise he thinks even as he thinks 'अहमप्येवमेवैतच्चिकीर्षामि यथा युवाम्|

विवेक्तुं नाहमिच्छामि त्वाकारं विदुरं प्रति || ततस्तेषां गुणानेव कीर्तयामि विशेषतः | नावबुध्येत विदुरो ममाभिप्रायमिङ्गितैः || यच्च त्वं मन्यसे प्राप्तं तद्ब्रवीहि सुयोधन ||'.

The changed situation does not please *Duryodhana* and puts before his father one after another outlandish and devious proposal that would strike his evil mind, his entire attempt to bring dissention between *Kunti's* and *Madri's* sons. They consider even an option to wean *Drupada* away from them through inducement. If that fails to instill seeds of doubt in *Draupadi* her marriage being immoral, therefore, she should desert them or instead bring dissention among brothers making *Draupadi* to prefer one over the other. Since *Pandavas* are depending entirely on *Bhima*, he should be killed and send *Karna* to defeat all of them 'अद्य तान् कुशलैर्विप्रैः सुगुप्तैराप्तकारिभिः | कुन्तिपुत्रान्भेदयामो माद्रिपुत्रौ च पाण्डवौ || अथवा द्रुपदो राजा महद्भिर्वित्तसंचयैः | पुत्राश्चास्य प्रलोभ्यन्ताममात्याश्चैव सर्वशः ||..इतरेतरतः पार्थान्भेदयन्त्वनुरागतः|..व्युत्थापयन्तु वा कृष्णां बहुत्वात्सुकरं हि तत्| अथवा पाण्डवांस्ताभ्यां भेदयन्तु ततश्च ताम्||..भीमसेनस्य..मृत्युर्विधीयतां..'.

Karna is not inclined to agree to any of these un-wise and intemperate, saying 'दुर्योधन तव प्रज्ञा न सम्यगिति मे मतिः | न ह्युपायेन ते शक्याः पाण्डवाः कुरुवर्धन ||'. A proud *Kshatriyas* that he was, he prefers to fight and overpower them before they become powerful with *Panchalas* or *Krishna* coming to assist them with *Yadava* army, they should claim their right even as their ancestors did, since soft words, charity and dissention would not bring result 'यावच्च राज पाञ्चाल्यो नोद्यमे कुरुते मनः | सह पुत्रैर्महावीर्यैस्तावद् विक्रम पार्थिव || यावान्नयाति वार्ष्णेयः कर्षन्यादववाहिनीम्| राज्यार्थे पाण्डवानां पाञ्चाल्यसदनं प्रति || वसूनि विविधान्भोगान्राज्यमेव च केवलम्| नात्याज्यमस्ति कृष्णस्य पाण्डवार्थे कथचन || विक्रमेण मही प्राप्ता भरतेन महात्मना | विक्रमेण च लोकांस्त्रीञ्जितवान्पाकशासनः || विक्रमं च प्रशंसन्ति क्षत्रियस्य विशाम्पते | स्वको हि धर्मः शूराणां विक्रमः पार्थिवर्षभ || विक्रमं च प्रशंसन्ति क्षत्रियस्य विशाम्पते | स्वको हि धर्मः शूराणां विक्रमः पार्थिवर्षभ || ते बलेन वयं राजन्महता चतुरङ्गिणा | प्रमथ्य द्रुपदं शीघ्रमानयामेह पाण्डवान्|| न हि साम्ना न दानेन न भेदेन च पाण्डवाः | शक्याः साधयितुं तस्माद्विक्रमेणैव ताञ्जहि ||'. *Karna's* this statement like many others brings out his luminous character like Sun shining amidst dark and obscure clouds gathered around *Duryodhana*. If in spite such proud and righteous he becomes inclined to align with *Kauravas* it is entirely due to his supreme sense of gratitude and obligation which the *Kaurava* ha placed him under.

Since both are dear to *Bhishma* 'गान्धार्याश्च यथा पुत्रास्तथा कुन्तिसुता मम |' he is aghast to listen advising *Duryodhana* to desist from confrontation with *Pandavas* but share the kingdom with them as the ancestral property - 'न रोचते विग्रहो मे पाण्डुपुत्रैः कथंचन | यथैव धृतराष्ट्रो मे यथा पाण्डुरसंशयम्| गान्धार्याश्च यथा पुत्रास्तथा कुन्तीसुता मम | यथा च मम ते रक्ष्या धृतराष्ट्र तथा तव || दुर्योधन यथा राज्यं त्वमिद तात पश्यसि | मम पैतृकमित्येव तेऽपि पश्यन्ति पाण्डवाः || यदि राज्य न ते प्राप्ताः पाण्डवेय यशस्विनः | कुत एव तवापीदं भारतस्यापि कस्यचित्||'. Importance of the alliance between *Pandavas* and *Drupada* along with *Krishna* and *Balarama* was also not lost on *Vidura* or *Drona*. Therefore the common counsel and caution was - 'येषां पक्षधरो रामो येषां मन्त्री जनार्दनः | किं नु तैरजितं संख्ये येषां पक्षे च सात्यकिः || द्रुपदः श्वशुरो येषां येषां श्यालाश्च पार्षताः | धृष्टद्युम्नमुखा वीरा भ्रातरो द्रुपदात्मजाः ||.. बलवन्तश्च दाशार्हा बहवश्च विशांपते | यतः कृष्णस्ततः सर्वे यतः कृष्णस्ततो जयः ||'.*Karna* was treated as सूतपुत्र in spite of his being installed as a ruler. When *Karna* exclaims saying that it was strange that those who are under obligation to *Kauarvas* for their livelihood should oppose what is in favour of the *Kauravas*, he invited rebuke from the elders, *Drona* chiding him that his hatred for *Pandavas* makes him devil's advocate justifying *Duryodhana's* unreasonable demands 'विद्म ते भावदोषेण यदर्थमिदमुच्यते | दुष्ट पाण्डवहेतोस्त्वं दोषमाख्यापयस्युत || हितं तु परमं कर्ण ब्रवीमि कुलवर्धनम् |.. अतोऽन्यथा चेत्क्रियते यद् ब्रवीमि परं हितम्| कुरवो वै विनङ्क्ष्यन्ति नचिरेणैव मे मतिः ||'. *Vidura* cautions *Duryodhana* the difficulty denying them their right, with such powerful allies 'येषां पक्षधरो रामो येषां मन्त्री जनार्दनः | किं नु तैरजितं येषां पक्षे सात्यकिः || द्रुपदः श्वशुरो येषां येषां श्यालाश्च पार्षताः | धृष्टद्युम्नमुखा वीरा भ्रातरो द्रुपदात्मजाः ||'.

Dhritarashtra as always hesitates saying with little conviction that he is agreeable to accept *Pandava's* claim for their share, saying for him they are same - 'यथैव पाण्डोस्ते वीराः पुत्राः कुन्तीपुत्रा महारथाः | तथैव धर्मतः सर्वे मम पुत्रा न संशयः || यथैव मम पुत्राणामिदं राज्यं विधीयते | तथैव पाण्डुपुत्राणामिदं राज्यं न संशयः ||' but shrewdly shifts the enire responsibility on *Duryodhana's* reluctance to part their share. *Bhishma* and others counsel *Duryodhana* pointing out that the kingdom is ancestral property and it is improper to appropriate the entire kingdom without sharing with grace and good-will - 'अधर्मेण च राज्यं त्वं प्राप्तवान्भरतर्षभ | तेऽपि राज्यमनुप्राप्ताः पूर्वमेवेति मे मतिः || मधुरेणैव राज्यस्य तेषामर्धं प्रदीयताम्| एतद्धि पुरुषव्याघ्र हितं सर्वजनस्य ||'.

In the end *Dhritarashtra* succumbs to the advice of the elders and sends *Vidura* to bring back

Pandavas back to *Hastinapur. Vidura* finding *Krishna* with them conveys *Dhritarashtra's* message. *Pandavas* return, *Dhritarashtra* advises them to settle in *Khandavaprastha,* praising it as the seat of their ancestors, - 'भातृभिः सह कौन्तेय निबोध गदतो मम | पुनर्नो विग्रहो मा भूत्खाण्डवप्रस्थमाविश || न च वो वसतस्तत्र कश्चिच्छक्तः प्रबाधितुम्| संरक्ष्यमाणान्पार्थेन त्रिदशानिव वज्रिणा || अर्धं राज्यस्य संप्राप्य खाण्डवप्रस्थमाविश |'. With the blessings of the elders, *Pandavas* depart to the new region, only to find it covered with deep and wild forest. Without any regret or complaint, with *Krishna's* help, they begin clearing the land for human habitation, renamed *Indraprastha. Yudhishthira* is crowned King, which he attributes to *Krishna's* assistance and grace as the fatherly figure, not having known their own father 'तव प्रसादात्वार्ष्णेय राज्यं प्राप्तं मयानघ | प्रसादादेव ते वीर शून्यं राष्ट्रं सुदुर्गमम्|| तवैव तु प्रसादेन राज्यमस्थाश्च महामते || गतिस्त्वनन्तकाले च पाण्डवान्तु माधव | मातास्माकं पिता देवो न पाण्डुं विद्म वै वयम्|| ज्ञात्वा नु कृत्यं कर्तव्यं कार्यस्व भवान्हि नः || यदिष्टनुमन्तव्यं पाण्डवानां त्वयानघ ||'. Thereafter, *Krishna* departs for *Dvaraka* assuring them his continued support.

The bond between *Krishna* and *Pandavas* from thence onwards becomes closer. Among all the brothers *Arjuna* was closest to *Krishna* being of the same age, giving rise to the oft repeated declaration that *Arjuna* and *Krishna* were the ancient sages नर and नारायण born anew to fulfill the *divine intent* and purpose and *Krishna* declaring that *Arjuna* and he are same and whoever hates one hates the other and one who is cordial with one is also with other 'ममैव त्वं तवैवाहं ये मदीयास्तवैव ते | यस्त्वां द्वेष्टि स मां द्वेष्टि यस्त्वामनु स मामनु ||'. To *Yudhishthira* he confides that *Arjuna* is his friend, relative and disciple, for whom he is ready to offer even half of his flesh, even as he will give his life in return - 'तव भ्राता मम सखा सम्बन्धी शिष्य एव च | मांसान्युत्कृत्य दास्यामि फाल्गुनार्थे महीपते || एष चापि नरव्याघ्रो मत्कृते जीवितं त्यजेत्| एष नः समयस्तात तारयेम परस्परम्||'. On the battle field having further declared that among *Vrishnis* he is *Vasudeva,* among *Pandavas* he is *Arjuna* - 'वृष्णिनां वासुदेवोऽस्मि पाण्डवानां धनञ्जयः' *Yudhishthira* was not surprised to see finally ion heaven, *Arjuna* attending *Krishna* in his form as *Brahman*, with his weapons, the discus and others 'ददर्श तत्र गोविन्दं ब्राह्मेण वपुषान्वितम्| तेनैव दृष्टपूर्वेण साद‍ृश्येनैव सूचितम्|| दीप्यमानं स्ववपुषा दिव्यैरस्त्रैरुपस्थितम्| चक्रप्रभृतिभिर्घोरैर्दिव्यैः पुरुषविग्रहैः || उपास्यमानं वीरेण फाल्गुनेन सुवर्चसा | तथास्वरूपं कौन्तेयोददर्श मधुसुदन ||'.

Conscious that *Draupadi's* marriage to *Pandavas* took place in unusual manner, *Narada* advises to act accordingly to avoid any disagreements - 'पाञ्चाली भवतामेका धर्मपत्नी यशस्विनी | यथा वो नात्र भेदः स्यात्तथा नीतिर्विधीयताम्||'. Therefore he suggests that each one by turn should live exclusively with her for one year, during which period others should not intrude the privacy. And should there be any breach or transgression, then the defaulter should perform penance living in forest for twelve years as celibate 'एकैकस्य गृहे कृष्णा वसेद्वर्षमकल्मषा | द्रौपद्या नः सहासीनानन्योन्यं योऽभिदर्शयेत्| स नो द्वादश वर्षाणि ब्रह्मचारी वने वसेत्||'. They all agree and when *Arjuna* was obliged to breach *Yudhishthira*'s privacy with *Draupadi,* for bringing bow and arrows for saving a desperate *Brahmin* he decides to live in forests for twelve years as celibate even though *Yudhishthira* condones his transgression.

During these twelve years, *Arjuna* visits many pilgrim and religious centres, overlooking perhaps his resolve to remain celibate. During this period he marries *Ulupi* a *Naga* damsel from Assam, *Chitrangada* from *Manipur* on the east having a child each from them. Thereafter, he visits *Gokarna,* a pilgrim centre on the west coast and thereafter travels northward to *Prabhas* where he meets his friend *Krishna.* Here again the god of Love shoots his arrows when he sees *Subhadra, Krishna's* sister 'दृष्ट्वैव तामर्जुनस्य कन्दर्पः समजायत | तं तदैकाग्रमनसं कृष्णः पार्थमलक्षयत्||', inviting a friendly banter from *Krishna*, 'वनेचरस्य किमिदं कामेनालोड्यते मनः |'. *Arjuna* has no explanation except conceding and that he will be happy if she marries him - 'दुहिता वसुदेवस्य वासुदेवस्य च स्वसा | रूपेण चैषा सम्पन्ना कमिवैषा न मोहयेत्|| कृतमेव तु कल्याणं सर्वं मम भवेद्ध्रुवम्| यदि स्यान्मम वार्ष्णेयी महिषीयं स्वसा तव ||'.

For *Krishna* this a golden opportunity to cement his relationship with *Arjuna,* though he was aware of *Balarama's* desire to give her in marriage to *Duryodhana*, who apart from being his dear disciple was a ruling the powerful kingdom from *Hastinapur*. Therefore, *Krishna*, encourages *Arjuna* to elope with her 'स त्वमर्जुन कल्याणीं प्रसह्य भगिनीं मम | हर स्वयंवरे ह्यस्याः को वै वेद चिकीर्षितम्||'. After receiving *Yudhishthira*'s consent and *Krishna*'s assistance, *Arjuna* elopes with *Subhadra* making *Balarama* and *Vrshnis* angry and aggressive saying who will make a hole in the same vessel from which he has taken his meals 'को हि

तत्रैव भुक्त्वान्नं भाजनं भेत्तुमर्हति | मन्यमानः कुले जातमातमानं पुरुषः क्वचित्||'. *Krishna* counsels them saying that *Arjuna* was in love with *Subhadra* and how long can he wait for her to given in marriage. He has done nothing which any brave *kshatriya* would not do and besides he also belongs to *Shananu's* family apart from being their aunt *Kunti's* son. *Krishna* wonders whether there could be any one in the whole world except perhaps the god *Rudra* himself, he has *Krishna's* own chariot, saddled with his speeding horses and well armed with weapons. Therefore, instead of fighting with him they should bring back speaking soft words, that would be his advise 'नावमानं कुलस्यास्य गुडाकेशः प्रयुक्तवान्| सम्मतोऽभ्यधिकस्तेन प्रायुक्तोऽयं न संशयः || प्रदानापि कन्यायाः पशूनकोऽनुमन्यते |..अतः प्रसह्य हृतवान्कन्यां धर्मेण पाण्डवः || उचितश्चैव सम्बन्धः सुभद्रां च यशस्विनीम्| एष चापीदृशः पार्थः प्रसह्य हृतवानिति || भरतस्यान्वये जातं शान्तनोश्च यशस्विनः | कुन्तिभोजात्मजापुत्रं को बुभूषेत नार्जुनम्|| न च पश्यामि यः पार्थं विजयेत रणे बलात्| वर्जयित्वा विरूपाक्षं भगनेत्रहरं हरम्|| अपि सर्वेषु लोकेषु सेन्द्ररुद्रेषु मारिष || स च नाम रथस्तादृङ्मदीयास्ते चवाजिनः || योद्धा पार्थश्च शीघ्रास्त्रःको नु तेन समो भवेत्| तमभिद्रुत्य सान्त्वेन परमेण धनंजयम्|| न्यवर्तयत संहृष्टा ममैषा परमा गतिः || '. Thus mollified *Vrishnis* bring back *Arjuna* and *Subhadra* to *Dvaraka* for celebrations. After his stay in *Dvaraka* he spends the remaining days of his pilgrimage in *Pushkara* before going back to *Indraprastha*.

On reaching *Indraprastha* he bows to *Kunti*, *Yudhishthira* and *Bhima* and embraces his younger brothers. When he goes to *Draupadi*, she chides him lovingly and with mock anger to go to his new bride, saying that new relationships weaken the old ones 'तं द्रौपदी प्रत्युवाच प्रणयात्कुरुनन्दनम्| तत्रैव गच्छ कौन्तेय यत्र सा सात्वतात्मजा | सुबद्धस्यापि भारस्य पूर्वबन्धः श्लथायते ||'. Thereafter, she welcomes *Subhadra* with affection as sister and companion. As days pass *Subhadra* gives birth to a son, as *Indra's* wife *Shachi* gave birth to her son, *Jayant*. He was named *Abhimanyu*, since he was अभि fearless and मन्युमन् - fighting with valour 'अभिश्च मन्युमांश्चैव ततस्तमरिमर्दनम्| अभिमन्युरिति प्राहुरार्जुनिं पुरुषर्षभ ||'. In the meanwhile, *Yudhishthira* devoted his time and energy for the welfare of his subjects ruling them with righteousness, which made *Indraprastha* gain strength and prosperity 'तेषां समविभक्तानां क्षितौ देहवतामिव | बभौ धर्मार्थकामानां चतुर्थ इव पार्थिवः ||..न तु केवलदैवेन प्रजा भावेन रेमिरे | यद्बभूव मनःकान्तं कर्मणा स चकार तत्||'.

To accommodate increasing population, Pandavas they undertake extensive deforestation, which gave rise to an interesting mythical and legendary account, which explains the process of *Arya* expansion in those areas where the *naga asuras* were settled in the post *Sindhu* valley and post *vedic* expansion of individual territories. This region known as *Khandavaprastha* for great and uninterrupted sacrifices performed in earlier era, by King *Shvetaki*, equal in glory with *Indra*, which caused officiating *Brahmin* to become tired and sick. When they refused to officiate any further, the king approached *Rudra* for assistance which he was not able to help. Instead he recommends celibacy for twelve and recommends *Durvasa*, in whom his essence exists, to perform the sacrifice, since only *Brahmins* can perform the sacrifice according to prescribed rites and rituals - 'उवाच भगवानप्रीतः स्मितपूर्वमिदं वचः | नास्माकमेष विषयो वर्तते याजनं प्रति ||.. नोपितोऽहं नृपश्रेष्ठ त्वयेहाराधनेन कर्मणा | याजनं ब्राह्मणानां तु विधिदृष्टं परंतप || अतोऽहं त्वां स्वयं नाद्य याजयामि परंतप | ममांशस्तु क्षितितले महाभागो द्विजोत्तमः || दुर्वासा इति विख्यातः स हि त्वां याजयिष्यति |'. The king completes the sacrifice accordingly. Though *Agni* is satisfied he becomes sick and weak due excessive consumption of ghee. To rejuvenate *Agni* again, *Brahma* suggests him to consume herbs and vegetation grown in *Khandava* forest, 'तत्र सर्वाणि सत्त्वानि निवसन्ति विभावसो तेषां त्वं मेदसा तृप्तः प्रकृतिस्थो भविष्यसि ||'.

Agni does not succeed because even as he consumes the forest, *Indra* pour rains having given earlier protection to *Takshaaka Naga*, a non-*Arya* dwelling in the forest, 'वसतस्य सखा तस्य तक्षकः पन्नगः सदा | सगणस्तत्कृते दावं परिरक्षति वज्रभृत्||'. Unhappy at this unexpected intervention, at the instance of *Brahma*, *Agni* approaches *Arjuna* and *Krishna* who as the ancient seers *Nara* and *Narayana* were living nearby 'नरनारायणौ यौ तौ पूर्वं देवौ विभावसो | सम्प्राप्तौ मानुषे लोके कार्यार्थं हि दिवौकसाम्|| अर्जुनं वासुदेवं च यौ तौ लोकोऽभिमन्यते | तावेतौ सहितावेहि खाण्डवस्य समीपतः || तौ त्वं याचस्व साहाय्ये दाहार्थं खाण्डवस्य च | ततो धक्ष्यसि तं दावं रक्षितं त्रिदशैरपि ||'. *Agni* approaches them and *Arjuna* and *Vasudeva* agree but desire that they should be provided with necessary weapons and vehicle 'उत्तमास्त्राणि मे सन्ति दिव्यानि च बहूनि च | यैरहं शक्नुयां योद्धुमपि वज्रधरान्बहून्|| धनुर्मे नास्ति भगवन्बाहुवीर्येण सम्मितम्, कुर्वतः समरे यत्नं वेगं यद् विषहेन्मम || शरैश्च मेऽर्थो बहुभिरक्षय्यैः क्षिप्रमस्यतः | न हि वोढुं रथः शक्तः शरान्मम यथेप्सितान्||अश्वांश्च दिव्यानिच्छेय पाण्डुरान्वातरंहसः | रथं च मेघनिर्घोषं सूर्यप्रतिमतेजसम्|| तथा

कृष्णस्य वीर्येण नायुधं विद्यते समम्| येन नागान्पिशाचांश्च निहन्यान्माधवो रणे || पौरुषेण तु यत्कार्यं तत् कर्तासि स्व पावक | करणानि समर्थानि भगावन्दातुमर्हसि ||'. *Agni* requests *Varuna* to present *Arjuna* the *Gandeev* bow and inexhaustible sheath, a chariot with insignia of the Monkey. *Krishna* is provided with a conch, *Kaumodaki.* Thus armed they help *Agni* burn the *Khandava* forest. *Indra* retaliates sending gods and rains to protect *Takshaka* but without success. Gods report that *Krishna* and *Arjuna* are helping *Agni* whereupon *Indra* concedes defeat and assures *Arjuna* the powerful *Agneya* weapon when the proper time arrives.

When *Khandava* forest was burning, *Krishna* and *Arjuna* and destroy many non-*Arya* tribes who had taken shelter after the fall of the *Sindhu valley* and *Sarasvati river* civilizations. *Khandava* conflagration assumes importance of epic dimension with *Mahabharata* recording the destruction many tribes, with their animals, birds, vegetation therein. At that time, *Takshaka*, the ruler of the *nagas*, was not present, having gone to *Kuruikshetra* 'न तं सत्रा संनिहितस्तक्षकोा भुजगोत्तमः || दाहकाले खाण्डवस्य कुरुक्षेत्रं गतो ह्यसौ |'. His wife who was flying to save herself was killed by *Arjuna* but his son *Asvasena* escapes with *Indra's* help with all his entourage seeing the mass destruction. Seeing him escape *Arjuna* curses him to wander the rest of his life unsettled 'अप्रतिष्ठो भविष्यसि'. *Krishna* and *Agni* endorsing the curse.

The destruction of the non-*Aryas* was disastrous with commotion comparable to great storm lashing the lands. *Krishna* was appearing like *Time eterna*l come to destroy the *ogres*, *nagas*, hundreds of birds and animals. None of the assembled *danavas* could save themselves from *Krishna* and *Arjuna*, the ancient seers whose brave deeds all were aware, difficult to be overtaken. Therefore, on the advice of the other gods, *Indra* leaves the battle filed, seeing which *Krishna* and *Arjuna* blow their triumphant trumpets. *Agni* was satisfied with the offerings which *Krishna* and *Arjuna* had made - 'तथा शैलनिपातेन भीषिताः खाण्डवालयाः | दानवा राक्षसा नागास्तरक्षृक्षवनौकसः ||...पिशाचान्पक्षिणो नागान्पशूंश्चैव सहस्रशः विघ्नंश्चरति वार्ष्णेयः कालवत्तत्र भारत || समेतानां च सर्वेषां दानवानां च सर्वशः || विजेता नाभवत्कश्चित्कृष्णपाण्डवयोर्मृधे ||..नरनारायणवेतौ पूर्वदेवौ दिवि श्रुतौ || भावानप्यभिजानाति यद्वीर्यौ यत्पराक्रमौ | नैतौ शक्यौ दुराधर्षौ विजेतुमजितौ युधि ||..देवराजं तदा यान्तं सह देवैरवेक्ष्य तु || वासुदेवार्जुनो वीरौ सिंहनादं विनेदतुः |...तां स कृष्णार्जुनकृतां सुधां प्राप्य हुतासनः || बभूव मुदितस्तृप्तः परां निर्वृत्तिमागतः |'. At that time *Krishna* also sees मय, the architect under *Takshaka* trying to escape and decides to kill him but saved only through *Arjuna's* intervention. *Krishna* also pardons and lets him go alive. 'तथासुरं मयं नाम तक्षकस्य निवेशनात्|| विप्रद्रवन्तं सहसा ददर्श मधुसूदनः |..विज्ञाय दानवेन्द्राणां मयं वै शिल्पिनां वरम्|| जिघांसुर्वासुदेवस्तं चक्रमुद्यम्य धिष्ठितः | स चक्रमुद्यतं दृष्ट्वा दिधक्षन्तं च पावकम्|| अभिधावार्जुनेत्येवं मयस्त्राहीति चाब्रवीत्|| तस्यभीतस्वनं श्रुत्वा मा भैरिति धनंजयः | प्रत्युवाच मयं पार्थो जीवयन्निव भारत | तं न भेतावर्यमित्याह मयं पार्थो दयापरः || तं पार्थनाभाये दत्ते नमुचेर्भ्रातरं मयम्| न हन्तुमैच्छद्दाशार्हः पावको न ददाह च ||'.

Agni after his hunger was satisfied, reveals himself to *Arjuna*, even as many gods appearing in the sky spoke to *Krishna* and *Arjuna* declaring that the deed which they have done was difficult even for them. *Indra* promises *Arjuna* all the weapons as and when *Shiva* decides. *Krishna* seeks *Indra's* blessing so that his fondness for *Arjuna* may increase. After *Agni* takes leave, they go to the banks of river to rest awhile, when मय informs *Arjuna* that since he was the expert architect *danava* king *Vrishashipran's* family, he would like to do any thing which they would asks him to do. Arjuna says that if he does any thing which *Krishna* desires that would also please him. *Krishna* then tells him since he is an architect he should construct a beautiful sacrificial hall - 'अहं हि विश्वकर्मा वै दानवानां महाकविः | सोऽहं वै त्वत्कृते कर्तुं किंचिदिच्छामि पाण्डव ||..न चापि तव सकल्पं मोघमिच्छामि दानव | कृष्णस्य क्रियतां किंचित्तथा प्रतिकृतं मयि ||..यदि त्वं कर्तुकामोऽसि प्रियं शिल्पवतां वर | धर्मराजस्य दैतेय यादृशीमिह मन्यसे ||' Thereafter after taking leave of *Kunti* and *Pandavas Krishna* leaves for *Dvaraka*..

After few days *Maya* tells *Arjuna* that in earlier times he had prepared a huge store in which all the weapons and the implements of *Vrishashipran* were preserved. There is one great mace which *Vrishashipra* used in his great battles, which will adorn *Bhima* as the *Gandeeva* adorns *Arjuna* even a powerful conch *Devdatta,* saying that these weapons will shine in their hands 'अस्ति बिन्दुसरस्युग्रा गदा च कुरुनन्दन | निहिता भावयाम्येव राज्ञा हत्वा रणे रिपून्| सा वै शतसहस्रस्य सम्मिता शत्रुघातिनी | अनुरूपा च भीमस्य गांडीव भवतो यथा || वारुणस्य महाशङ्खो देवदत्तः सुघोषवान्| सर्वमेतत्प्रदास्यामि भवते नात्र सशयः ||'.Then as permitted he goes to the difficult terrain and brings all the things along with all the materials required to build the sacrificial hall and gives the mace to *Bhima* and *Devadatta* conch to *Arjuna.* Then he creates a great building which even *Sudharma* belonging to

Yadavas and *Brahma's* balding cannot match.

When *Yudhishthira* decides to perform *Rajasuya Yajna* he approaches *Krishna* for his approval, which is given without hesitation saying that he deserves to perform the sacrifice - 'सर्वैगुणैर्महाराज राजसूयं त्वमार्हमसि |', opining, however, that as long as *Jarasandha* is alive, and the kings imprisoned by him are not released, *Rajasuya* sacrifice would not be considered as having successfully performed 'न तु शक्यं जरासंधे जीवमाने महाबले | राजसूयस्त्वयावाप्तुमेषा राजन्मतिर्मम ||.. यदि त्वेनं महाराज यज्ञं प्राप्तुमभीप्स्यासि | यतस्व तेषां मोक्षाय जरासंधवधाय च || समारम्भो न शक्योऽयमन्यथा कुरुनन्दन | राजसूयश्च कार्त्स्न्येन कर्तुं मतिमतां वर ||'. *Bhima* assures *Yudhishthira* that he and *Arjuna* would certainly subdue Jarasandha with *Krishna's* guidance. There are many rulers but only few can represent themselves as *Samrat*. Though by becoming a *Samrat* no one is assured heavens, yet every one desires that position. *Krishna* points out that foolish persons begin their ambitious enterprises without planning for their success. *Yuvanashva Mandhata* became a *Samarat* with defeat of many equally proficient adversaries, *Bhagiratha* through proper governance, *Kartavirya* through austerities, *Bharata* through valor. *Yudhishthira* would not become a *Samrat* unless *Jarasandha* is first vanquished.

Yudhishthira listening to these words becomes momentarily despondent, saying how can he then aspires to becomes a *samrat* and gain glory unless Krishna and his two brothers confront *Jarasandha* where even *Yama* is uncertain to succeed 'भीमार्जुनावुभौ नेत्रे मनो मन्ये जनार्दनम् | मनश्चक्षुर्विहीनस्य कीदृशं जीवितं भवेत्|| जरासंधबलं प्राप्य दुष्पारं भीमविक्रमम् | यमोऽपि न विजेताऽजौ तत्र वः किं विचेष्टितुम्||' . *Arjuna* as usual was optimistic in his own quiet way, saying if by killing *Jarasandha* the kings are freed what other good-will can it bring ! Having decided to perform *Rajasuya* sacrifice, if one does not take the next logical step then it would be a show weakness, deserving only ochre robes of an ascetic 'जरासन्धविनाशं च राज्ञां च परिरक्षणम् | यदि कुर्याम यज्ञार्थं किं ततः परमं भवेत्|| अनारम्भे हि नियतो भवेदगुणनिश्चयः |..काषायं सुलभं पश्चान्मुनीनां शमिच्छताम्||'. *Krishna* is pleased with his firm resolve of one born in *Bharata* family and son of *Kunti*, because death is uncertain and not going for a war has not saved any one from death 'जातस्य भारते वंशे तथा कुन्त्याः सुतस्य च | या वै युक्ता मतिः सेयमर्जुनेन प्रदर्शिता || न स्म मृत्युं वयं विद्म रात्रौ वा यदि वा दिवा | न चापि कंचिदमरमयुद्धेनानुशुश्रुम ||'.

Krishna suggests that they should go to *Jarasnadha in cognito* and make him fight with any one of them, preferably with *Bhima*. *Yudhishthira* too agrees and *Krishna* takes *Bhima* and *Arjuna* with him as their refuge and protector 'पाण्डवानां भवान्नाथो भवन्तं चाश्रिता वयम्||', saying that under his leadership they would certainly perform great deeds through ethical, moral and fair means 'एवमेव यदुश्रेष्ठ यावत्कार्यार्थसिद्धये | अर्जुनः कृष्णमन्वेतु भीमोऽन्वेतु धनंजयम् | नयो जयो बलं चैव विक्रमे सिद्धिमेष्यति ||'. Thereafter, they proceed to *Magadha* dressed as *Brahmins*, to fulfill their purpose. *Jarasandha* offers them seats though he wonders observing them appear more like *Kshatriyas* than *Brahmins*. *Krishna* then informs him that since they have come with specific purpose in mind, it would not be proper to receive honours from him. Aware that the responsibility of a family and a community depends on those who respect them, they have come to *Jarasandha* who has imprisoned many rulers against all norms of क्षत्र धर्म and therefore, deserves to be punished. How can any one kill another person or sacrifice him to *Rudra*? Consequential demerits would surely fall on those kings who either join him or keep quiet when such act is performed. Therefore, conscious of क्षत्र धर्म, they have come to punish him to stop him from such unrighteous action. He concedes that they are not *Brahmins*, identifying himself as *Krishna* and the other two as *Pandavas*.

Jarasandha is not unnerved by words spoken by *Krishna*, his enemy and refuses to release the imprisoned kings, challenges them all to fight either with his army or singly with him one after another - 'सैन्यं सैन्येन व्यूढेन एक एकेन वा पुनः | द्वाभ्यां त्रिभिर्वा योत्स्येऽहं युगपत्पृथगेव वा ||'. *Krishna* agrees and asks *Jarasandha* to choose any among them to fight. *Jarasandha* prefers *Bhima*, as one equal in age and strength, preferring to die in the hands of a great fighter. 'त्वया सार्धं श्रेयसा निर्जितं वरम || एवमुक्त्वा जरासंधो भीमसेनमरिंदमः | प्रत्युद्ययौ महातेजाः शक्रं बल इवासुरः ||', refusing *Arjuna* as one younger and *Krishna* as one who according to him is only a cowherd not equal to him as the King of *Magadha*. The fight continues for long till *Bhima*, guided by *Krishna* splits *Jarasandha's* body in two halves, throwing each side to two opposite directions, lest the severed parts

may not join together as he was blessed. All the kings imprisoned by *Jarasandha* are released and *Sahadeva*, *Jarasandha's* son is installed on the throne of *Magadha*, before they return to *Indraprastha* with innumerable wealth. Similarly, *Sahadeva* and *Nakula* bring wealth and allegiance from rulers of different regions who having accepted *Yudhishthira's* suzerainty participate in the *Rajasuya* sacrifice.

Chapter III

Rajasuya sacrifice begins and ends with great pomp and splendour, scores of rulers assembled from different parts participating therein. As it comes to close, the time comes to honour the most eligible and respected one for the oblation अर्घ्य. *Bhishma* suggests *Krishna* as the most deserving among all -'अमन्यत तदा कृष्णमर्हणीयतमं भुवि | एष ह्येषां समस्तानां तेजोबलपराक्रमैः | मध्ये तपन्निवाभाति ज्योतिषामिव भास्करः || असूर्यमिव सूर्येण निर्वातमिव वायुना | भासितं ह्लादितं चैव कृष्णेनेदं सदो हि नः ||'. While all accept the suggestion with acclamation, *Jarasandha's son Sahadeva* the *Magadha* ruler comes forward to assist *Yudhishthira*, seeing which *Jarasnadha's* earstwhile close associate *Shishupala*, the ruler of *Chedi* vehemently opposes this suggestion as improper not bringing any credit for *Pandavas*.

There are great *Kshatriya* rulers present, who equally deserve the honour 'नायमर्हति वार्ष्णेयस्तिष्ठत्स्विह महात्मसु | महीपतिषु कौरव्य राजवत्पार्थिवार्हणाम्|| नायं युक्तः समाचारः पाण्डवेषु महात्मसु | यत्कामात्पुण्डरीकाक्षं पाण्डवार्चितवानसि ||..कथं ह्यराजा दाशार्हो मध्ये सर्वमहीक्षिताम्| अर्हणामर्हति तथा यथा युष्माभिरर्चितः ||'. *Shishupala* points out that when his father *Vasudeva* is alive, *Krishna* cannot be a ruler and therefore, does not deserve a place in the assembly of rulers. If he is considered a great Teacher, then there is *Drona* to be honoured. If he is considered great *Ritvik* then none could be greater than *Vyasa*. He accuses that a great hoax being played honouring one who is not a ruler, therefore asks how can *Krishna* then be entitled to be honoured? 'अथ वा मन्यसे कृष्णं स्थविरं कुरुपुङ्गव | वसुदेवे स्थिते वृद्धे कथमर्हति तत्सुतः || आचार्यं मन्यसे कृष्णमथ वा कुरुनन्दन | द्रोणे तिष्ठति वार्ष्णेयं कस्मादर्चितवानसि || ऋत्विजं मन्यसे कृष्णमथ वा कुरुनन्दन | द्वैपायने स्थिते वृद्धे कथं कृष्णोऽर्चितस्त्वया ||'. He accuses *Pandavas* of ignorance and immaturity, which their *self-interest* prompts them and not क्षत्रधर्म - 'नैवर्त्विग्नैव चाचार्यो न राजा मधुसूदनः | अर्चितश्च कुरुश्रेष्ठ किमन्यत्प्रियकाम्यया ||'. It was not out of fear, greed or for any assurance that they are paying tribute to *Yudhishthira* but because he has followed क्षत्र धर्म and seeks recognition as *Samrat* 'वयं तु न भयादस्य कौन्तेयस्य महात्मनः | प्रयच्छामः करान् सर्वे न लोभान्न च सान्त्वनात्|| अस्य धर्मप्रवृत्तस्य पार्थिवत्वं चिकीर्षतः | करानस्मै प्रयच्छामः सोऽयमस्मान्न मन्यते ||'. To honour *Krishna* is like getting a eunuch married or showing a mirror to a blind one 'क्लीबे दारक्रिया यादृगन्धे वा रूपदर्शनम्| अराज्ञो राजवत्पूजा तथा ते मधुसूदन ||'.

Seeing this unwelcome intrusion, *Bhisma* too bursts out in exasperation saying that *Krishna* is *Supreme Being* and he who does not accept this truth does not deserve to be convinced. *Krishna* is respected not only by humans but also in the three worlds. Therefore, it is proper to honour him even if there be other senior persons are in the assembly, because in him, the sun, moon, stars, planets and all elements find refuge, being supreme among all gods 'नास्मै देयो ह्यनुनयो नायमर्हति सान्त्वनम्| लोकवृद्धतमं कृष्णं योऽर्हणां नाभिमन्यते ||..नहि केवलमस्माकमयमर्च्यतमोऽच्युतः | त्रयाणामपि लोकानामर्चनीयो महाभुजः ||..तस्मात्सत्स्वपि वृद्धेषु कृष्णमर्चाम नेतरान | एवं वक्तुं न चार्हस्त्वं मा ते भूद्बुद्धिरीदृशी ||.. आदित्यश्चन्द्रमाश्चैव सर्वं कृष्णे प्रतिष्ठितम् | दिशश्च विदिशश्चैव सर्वं कृष्णे प्रतिष्ठितम्|| अग्निहोत्रमुखा वेदा गायत्री छन्दसां मुखम्| राजा मुखं मनुष्याणां नदीनां सागरो मुखम्|| नक्षत्राणां मुखं चन्द्र आदित्यस्तेजसां मुखम्| पर्वतानां मुखं मेरुर्गरुडः पततां मुखम्|| ऊर्ध्वं तिर्यगधश्चैव यावती जगतो गतिः | सदेवकेषु लोकेषु भगवान्केशवो मुखम्||'. He is neither one who is born in human womb nor one who needs a human form, becoming manifest by his own splendour and becomes merged in his own splendour like the bubbles rising in the waters and becoming merged in water. There is end to his manifestations nor anything beyond 'नैष गर्भत्वमापेदे न योन्यामवसत्प्रभुः | आत्मनस्तेजसा कृष्णः सर्वेषां कुरुते गतिम्|| यथा बुद्बुद उत्थाय तत्रैव प्रविलीयते | चराचराणि भूतानि तथा नारायणे सदा || न प्रमातुं महाबाहुः शक्यो भारत केशवः | परं ह्यपरमेतस्माद्विश्वरूपान्न विद्यते ||'.

Thus describing *Krishna's* eligibility for the honour, *Bhishma* tells *Yudhishthira* not to heed *Shishupala's* childish prattle. Let him do whatever he desires if he feels the honour is inappropriate for *Krishna* 'अयं तु पुरुषो बालः शिशुपालो न बुध्यते | सर्वत्र सर्वदा कृष्णं तस्मादेवं प्रभाषते ||.. अथैनां दुष्कृतां पूजां शिशुपालो व्यवस्यति | दुष्कृतायां यथान्यायं तथायं कर्तुमर्हति ||'. Let him do whatever he desires if he feels the honour is inappropriate for *Krishna* 'अयं तु पुरुषो बालः शिशुपालो न बुध्यते | सर्वत्र सर्वदा कृष्णं तस्मादेवं प्रभाषते ||.. अथैनां दुष्कृतां पूजां शिशुपालो व्यवस्यति | दुष्कृतायां यथान्यायं तथायं कर्तुमर्हति ||'. *Sahadeva* then addresses all those who had gathered declaring that all those who do not associate with

them in worshipping *Krishna* for them he has placed his foot on their head, challenging them to fight him instead, those willing may stay. Thereafter as advised by sage *Narada* the rituals are completed and *Krishna* is duly honoured.

Thus rebuffed by all, *Shishupala* with great audacity calls other kings to rally behind him to fight *Vrishnis* and *Pandavas* for having heaped insults on them. Seeing the events turning unpleasant, some try to pacify him saying since all have accepted the decision as proper one, he should not object without knowing *Krishna's* greatness which *Bhishma* is surely aware. *Yudhishthira* becomes concerned seeing the assembled rulers disturbed like tempestuous ocean at the time of universal dissolution 'सागरसंकाशं दृष्ट्वा नृपतिमण्डलम्| संवर्तवताभिहतं भीमं क्षुब्धमिवार्णवम्||' but *Bhishma* counsels him not to fear seeing *Shishupala* foolishly speak like a dog pretending that pretends to be equal barking at the sleeping lion. It is natural for ignoble dogs to gather surround lion and create racket. 'मा भैस्त्वं कुरुशार्दूल श्वा सिंहं हन्तुमर्हति | शिवः पन्थाः सनीतोऽत्र मया पूर्वतरं वृतः || प्रसुप्ते हि यथा सिंहे श्वानस्तस्मिन्समागताः | भषेयुः सहिताः सर्वे तथेमे वसुधधिपाः || वृष्णिसिंहस्य सुप्तस्य तथामी प्रमुखे स्थिताः | भषन्ते तात संक्रुद्धाः श्वानः सिंहस्य संनिधौ || न हि संबुध्यते यावत्सुप्तः सिंह इवाच्युतः | तेन सिंहीकरोत्येतान् नृसिंहश्चेदिपुङ्गवः ||'.

Then *Bhishma* makes an interesting statement, 'नूनमेतत् समादातुं पुनरिच्छत्यधोक्षजः | यदस्य शिशुपालस्य तेजस्तिष्ठति भारत ||', indicating his mystical awareness, how the spiritual *essence* abides in people without themselves being aware. Those whom *Krishna* wants to destroy he makes his intelligence obscure, as has been the case of *Shishupala* 'चेदिराजस्य कौन्तेय सर्वेषां च महीक्षिताम्| आदातुं च नरव्याघ्रे यं यमिच्छत्ययं तदा | तस्य विप्लवते बुद्धिरेवं चेदिपतेर्यथा ||'. *Bhagavat Purana* explains that through hatred or love, through terror or affection one can absorb in *Krishna* more easily through enmity than through loyalty -'यथा वैरानुबन्धेन निर्वैरेण भयेन वा | स्नेहात्कामेन वा युञ्ज्यात्कथञ्चिन्नेक्षते पृथक्|| यथा वैरानुबन्धेन मर्त्यस्तन्मयतामियात्| न तथा भक्तियोगेन इति निश्चिता मतिः ||'. He becomes absorbed, even as a caterpillar caught in the web of a wasp becomes transformed as wasp. Therefore, even those princes like *Shishupala*, though inimical to *Krishna* being overwhelmed by his presence become divested of their sins and attain similarity with him कामाद् द्वेषाद्भयात्स्नेहाद्यथा भक्त्येश्वरे मनः | आवेश्य तदघं हित्वा बहवस्तद्गतिं गताः || गोप्यः कामाद्भयात्कंसो द्वेषाच्चैद्यादयो नृपाः | सम्बन्धात् वृष्णयः स्नेहाद्यूयं भक्तया वयं विभो ||.. ताविहाय पुनर्जातौ शिशुपालकरूषजौ | हरौ वैरानुबन्धेन पश्यतस्ते समीयतुः || एतः पूर्वकृतं यत्तद्राजानः कृष्णवैरिणः | जहुस्त्यान्ते तदात्मनः कीटः पेशस्कृतो यथा ||'. *Shishupala's* intolerant fulminations fall in the same category, *Bhishma* saying that every one whom *Krishna* makes up his mind to merge within his own *Self*, first makes him loose his sense of discrimination 'अदातुं च नरव्याघ्रो यं यमिच्छत्ययं तदा | तस्य विप्लवते बुद्धिरेवं चेदिपातेर्यथा ||'. It is, therefore, in spite of the numerous invectives being spewed out by *Shishupala* on him and *Bhishma*, *Krishna* keeps quiet for the proper time to come to deliver him from his human bondage.

Shishupala continues his tirade calling *Bhishma* why is he not feeling shame as a blot on his family - 'न व्यपत्रपसे कस्माद्वृद्धः सन्कुलपांसन |', even calling him as one acting without manliness belonging to the third nature 'युक्तमेतत्तृतीया प्रकृतौ वर्तता त्वया |', whose celibacy being a farce, a facade undoubtedly to conceal his manliness 'को हि धर्मोऽस्ति ते भीष्म ब्रह्मचर्यमिदं वृथा | यद्धारयसि मोहाद्वा क्लीबत्वाद् वा न संशयः ||. Therefore, he should not speak of righteousness 'वक्तुं धर्मादपेतार्थं त्वं हि सर्वकुरुसत्तम |', not having been associated with wise ones _'न त्वहं तव धर्मज्ञ पश्याम्युपचयं क्वचित्| न हि ते सेविता वृद्धा य एवं धर्ममब्रवीः ||'. He wonders how his tongue did not split when he was praising *Krishna's* brave deeds 'अवलिप्तस्य मूर्खस्य केशवं स्तोतुमिच्छतः | कथं भीष्म न ते जिव्हा शतधेयं विदीर्यते ||', a childless old man who follows wrong path, only to be killed by his own people like the swan which was killed 'सोऽनपत्यश्च वृद्धश्च मिथ्याधर्मानुसारकः | हंसवत्त्वामपीदानीं ज्ञातिभ्यः प्राप्नुया वधम्||'. Then turning to *Krishna,* he continues to spit invectives, saying that fooled by *Bhishma's* words he has come to consider himself a great among men of wisdom and lord of the worlds 'असौ मतिमतां श्रेष्ठो य एष जगतः प्रभुः | सम्भावयति चाप्येवं त्वद्वाक्याच्च जनार्दनः | एवमेतत्सर्वमिति तत्सर्वं वितथं ध्रुवम्||'. *Shishupala* speaks of the many despicable indiscretions, like killing *Jarasandha* after falsely representing himself as *Brahmin,* and having deceived *Pandavas* - 'इदं त्वाश्चार्यभूतं मे यदिमे पाण्डवास्त्वया | अपकृष्टाः सतां मार्गान्मन्यन्ते तच्च साध्विति || अथ वा नैतदाश्चर्यं येषां त्वमसि भारत | स्त्रीधर्मा च वृद्धश्च सर्वार्थानां प्रदर्शकाः ||'.

Bhima unable to listen to these fulminations, rushes towards *Shishupala* even as *Bhishma* comforts him with soft words. But *Shishupala* not daunted laughs at *Bhima* derisively, telling *Bhishma*

not to restrain him, so that rulers may see him lay dead like fly faced with fire. *Bhishma* coolly replies that when *Shishupala* was born with three heads and how when his mother, *Krishna's* aunt placed him on his lap two heads fell down. How faced with the strange event, *Shishupala's* mother had pleaded with *Krishna* to save him. *Krishna* had assured her that his hundred transgressions will be pardoned by him and only thereafter he will be punished - 'अपराधशतं क्षाम्यं मयाहस्य पितृवसः | पुत्रस्ता ते वधार्हस्य मा त्वं शोकं मनः कृथाः ||. *Bhishma* says perhaps that time has now come for him to die. Indeed he may be having *Krishna's* fragment which the lord desires to absorb within himself 'एष ह्यस्य महाबाहुर्स्तेजोऽशश्च हरेर्धुवम्| तस्मेव पुनरादातुमिच्छत्युत तथा विभुः ||'.

Unmindful, *Shishupala* continues to reproach *Bhishma* that if he has finished praising *Krishna's* great deeds, then let him also note the greatens of others rulers as well -'सत्स्तव च मतो भीष्म परेषां रमते यदि | तदा संस्तौषि राज्ञस्त्वमिमं हित्वा जनर्दनम्||', recounting the greatness of the many others comparing them to *Krishna's* deceit, deception and duplicity. *Bhishma* tells the assembled rulers that *Krishna* never strays from the righteous course and if any one is ready to challenge and be absorbed within his *Self* 'एष तिष्ठति गोविन्दः पूजितोऽस्माभिरच्युतः | यस्य वस्त्वरते बुद्धिर्मरणाय स माधवम्|| कृष्णमाह्वयतामद्य युद्धे चक्रगदाधरम्| यादवस्यैव देवस्य देह विशतु पातितः ||'.

Shishupala at this point of time, becomes desperate and challenges *Krishna,* who is the son of *Kamsa's* servant and never a ruler, to fight along with *Panduvas* to be killed by him for having humiliated all rulers - 'आह्वये त्वां रणं गच्छ मया सार्धं जनार्दन | यावदद्य निहन्मि त्वां सहित सर्वपाण्डवैः ||. . . नृपतीन्समतिक्रम्य यैरराजा त्वमार्चितः || ये त्वां दासमराजानं बाल्यादर्चन्ति दुर्मतिम्| अनर्हमर्हवत्कृष्ण वध्यास्त इति मे मतिः ||'. Listening to his bravado, *Krishna* speaks coolly saying that though *Shishupala's* mother was born in *Yadu* family, he has always been hostile towards them, though they have not done any harm. Now they have all seen how reprehensible has been his behaviour. Therefore, he no longer deserves any leniency and will surely have to die. It is true that he had earlier asked for *Rukmini's* hand from her brother, but being unworthy he could not have her, as a *shudra* would have *vedic mantras* 'रुक्मिण्यामस्य मूढस्य प्रार्थनाऽऽसीन्मुमूर्षतः | न च तां प्राप्तवान्मूढः शूद्रो वेदश्रुतीमिव ||'.

The moment *Krishna* spoke thus, *Shishupala* jeeringly told the assembly *look, look how this shameless person talks about his own marriage* 'तस्य तद् वचनं श्रुत्वा शिशुपालः प्रतापवान् | जहास स्वनवद्धास वाक्य चेदमुवाच ह || मत्पूर्वां रुक्मिणीं कृष्ण संसत्सु परिकीर्तयन्| विशेषतः पार्थिवेषु व्रीडां न कुरुषे कथम्|| मन्यमानो हि कः सत्सु पुरुषः परिकीर्तयेत्| अन्यपूर्वा स्त्रिय जातु त्वदन्यो मधुसूदन ||'. When *Shishupala* remarks that whether *Krishna* condones him or not, whether pleased or furious what can he do to him 'क्षम वा यदि ते श्रद्धा मा वा कृष्ण मम क्षम | कुद्धाद्वापि प्रसन्नाद्वा किं मे त्वत्तो भविष्यति ||. This was the last straw for *Krishna.* Observing that the situation is going out of control, he recalls his powerful disc *Sudarshana Chakra,* declaring that he had kept quiet because of his assurance to his mother. Now that the limit is crossed he has no other choice than to severe *Shishupala's* head from his body - 'श्रृण्वन्तु मे महिपाला येनैतत्क्षमितं मया | अपराधशतं क्षाम्यं मातुरस्यैव याचने || दत्तं मया याचितं च तानि पूर्णानि पार्थिवाः | अधुना वधयिष्यामि पश्यतां वो महीक्षिताम्||'. Then to the surprise and wonder of every one, when the severed head falls on the ground, a brilliant light issues forth from *Shishupala's* body as if Sun has risen on the horizon and bowing down to *Krishna,* merges within that great lord himself. With his death, the whole earth starts trembling, lightening flashes and rain pours without there being clouds. Seeing the indescribable act performed by *Krishna,* seers and rulers express their pleasure 'स पपात महाबाहुर्वज्राहत इवाचलः | ततश्चेदिपतेर्देहात्तेजोऽग्र्य ददृशुर्नृपाः || उत्पतन्त महाराज गगनादिव भास्करम्| ततः कमलपत्राक्षं कृष्णं लोकनमस्कृतम्| ववन्दे तत्तदा तेजो विवेश च नराधिप ||'. With all the obstructions being removed, the rulers accept *Yudhishthira* as a *Samrat*. Thereafter, *Yudhishthira* commanded his brothers to arrange for the funeral and death ceremonies for *Shishupala* and with due honour and following the rites and rituals installed his son on the throne.

With completion of the *Rajasuyta Yajna*, all the invitees return to their regions. *Krishna* expresses his desire to return to *Dvaraka* when *Yudhishthira* again expresses his debt to *Krishna,* 'युष्मत्प्रभावात् प्राप्तोऽयं राजसूयो महाक्रतुः | जनार्दनप्रभावाच्च सम्पूर्णो मे मनोरथः ||' acknowledging that the *Yajna* was entirely due to his grace - 'तव प्रसादाद् गोविन्द प्राप्तः क्रतुवरो मया || क्षत्रं समग्रापि च त्वत्प्रसादाद्वशे स्थितम्| उपदाय बलि मुख्य समुपस्थितम्||'. Before *Krishna* departs his final words for *Yudhishthira* contained the true role which he sees for a ruler 'अप्रमत्तो

स्थितो नित्यं प्रजाः पाहि विशाम्पते | पर्जन्यमिव भूतानि महाद्रुममिव द्विजाः || बान्धवास्त्वोपजीवन्तु सहस्राक्षमिवामराः |'.

Shishupala's death was world-shaking event, therefore, *Vyasa* explains *Yudhishthira* that such catastrophes have long term influence on the world affairs and will continue to have for the subsequent thirteen years causing extermination of *Kshatriyas*. Making him the prime reason, *Kshatriyas* under *Duryodhana* will great devastation only to be resolved by *Bhima* and *Arjuna* 'त्रयोदशं समा राजन्नुत्पातानां फलं महत्| सर्वक्षत्रविनाशाय भविष्यति विशाम्पते || त्वमेकं कारणं कृत्वा कालेन भरतर्षभ | समेतं पार्थिवं क्षत्रं यास्यति भारत | दुर्योधनापराधेन भीमार्जुनबलेन च ||. *Vyasa* then departs towards *Kailas* leaving *Yudhishthira* to realize that one cannot prevent *divine Will* 'अथं नु दैवं शक्यं न पौरुषेण प्रबाधितुम्||'.

Time in its own way weaves strange web. In which people are drawn by invisible threads. *Duryodhana*, who was one of the invitees stays back, attracted by opulence, sheer beauty and marvel of the hall constructed by मय with consummate art and illusions. With despondent and confused mind *Duryodhana* wanders through the hall adorned with shining stones shining like water when he lifts his dress fearing to be drenched. In another place he has similar experience when he walks thinking it to be land and falls in water. Seeing him fallen in water, *Bhima* laughs in booming voice, joined by others brothers and female embers of the family. *Duryodhana* could not stomach this insult. Seeing the power, opulence and prosperity of the *Pandavas*, he leaves *Indraprastha* frustrated and angry confiding in *Shakuni* his depression now that *Yudhishthira* is recognized as a *Samrat*, all others coming under his suzerainty, paying taxes as if they were traders. *Krishna* too in spite of his improper act killing *Shishupala* was honoured 'दृष्टेमां पृथिवीं कृत्स्नां युधिष्ठिरवशानुगाम्| जितामस्त्रप्रतापेन श्वेताश्वस्य महात्मनः || तं च यज्ञं यथाभूतं दृष्ट्वा मातुल | यथा शक्रस्य देवेषु तथाभूतं महाद्युते ||'. Expressing his great disappointment, he laments that their wealth and prosperity is making him burn with loathing 'श्रियं तथाऽऽगतां दृष्ट्वा ज्वलन्तीमिव पाण्डवे | अमर्षवशमापन्नो दह्यामि न तथोचितः ||'. In spite of his earlier efforts *Pandavas* are progressing and growing like lotus flowers in lake, inspite of all earlier attempts to destroy them. Indeed, divine will is powerful and human action is useless. - 'दैवमेव परं मन्ये पौरुषं च निरर्थकम्| दृष्ट्वा कुन्तीसुते शुद्धां श्रियं तामाहृतां तथा || कृतो यत्नो मया पूर्वं विनाशे तस्य सौबल | तच्च सर्वमतिक्रम्य संवृद्धोऽप्स्विव पङ्कजम्|| तेन दैवं परं मन्ये पौरुषं च निरर्थकम्| धार्तराष्ट्राश्च हीयन्ते पार्था वर्धन्ति नित्यशः || सोऽहं श्रियं च तां दृष्ट्वा सभां तां च तथाविधाम्| रक्षिभिश्चावहासं तं परितप्ये यथाग्निना ||'. Therefore he has not other option than to kill himself in fire or die consuming poison, because who would want to live seeing enemies becoming powerful and prosperous? 'वह्निमेव प्रवेक्ष्यामि भक्षयिष्यामि वा विषम्| अपो वापि प्रवेक्ष्यामि न शक्ष्यामि जीवितुम्|| को हि नाम पुमांल्लोके मर्षयिष्यति सत्त्ववान्| सपत्नानृद्ध्यतो दृष्ट्वा हीनमात्मानमेव च ||'.

With fire rankling in their hearts, *Duryodhana* and *Kauravas* needed was for some one to pour oil in that fire. *Shakuni*, of course, was nearby to be of assistance to transform the fire of discontent in one great inferno. The seeds having been sown, the tree began growing spreading its branches. Once back in *Hastinapur* they began hatching plans for destruction of the *Pandavas* each one more devious than the other. *Shakuni* was one undoubted master craftsman in crookedness, with intelligent mind which could take advantage of the righteous and god-fearing nature of the *Pandavas* as the most potent weapon. He assures *Duryodhana* that they would be surely be defeated, even though there are no possibility of success through armed struggle with *Vrishnis*, *Panchalas* and *Drupadas* on their side, affection of *Bhishma*, *Vidura* and *Drona* and unstinted support of *Krishna* 'नैते युधि पराजेतुं शक्या देवगणैरपि | महारथा महेष्वासाः कृतास्त्रा युद्धदुर्मदाः ||'. Even if they expect *Bhishma*, *Drona* and *Kripa* to remain neutral, even then *Duryodhana* would not be able to destroy them in a war. Since success is not possible through क्षत्र धर्म, it has to be attained through deceit and duplicity, hitting them hard where it hurts most.

Shakuni assures *Duryodhana* that he knows how they can be defeated 'अहं तु तद्विजानामि विजेतुं येन शक्यते |'. *Yudhishthira* is fond of the game of dice, even though he does not know how to play. Being obedient his brothers will not object his participation. *Shakuni*, on the other hand, is an expert in that game and can defeat any one easily. All that *Duryodhana* has to do is to see that *Dhritarashtra* invites *Yudhishthira* for the game and sure success is assured - 'द्यूतप्रियश्च कौन्तेयो न स जानाति देवितुम्| समाहूतश्च राजेन्द्रो न शक्ष्यति निवर्तितुम्|| देवने कुशलश्चाहं न मेऽस्ति सदृशो भुवि | त्रिषु लोकेषु कौरव्य तं त्वं द्यूते समाह्वय || इदं तु सर्वं त्वं राज्ञो दुर्योधन निवेदय | अनुज्ञातस्तु ते पित्रा विजेष्ये

नान्न संशयः ||'. A mind that is Jealous and influenced by anger and greed, falls easy prey to unrighteous suggestions and *Duryodhana* was no exception.

Duryodhana approaches *Dhritarashtra* sad and sullen and when inquired he was ready with his grouse that wealth and prosperity of the *Pandavas* is weighing heavy on his heart giving him no peace of mind for living any longer. *Duryodhana* is like a typical suffering man in *samsaara* who considering the temporal pleasures the *be all and end all*, is not happiness with what he has, craving for what he does not have and others have. Therefore, he grumble that he is eating and sleeping like a coward, waiting for good times to come, saying satiation with what one has terminates all avenues to progress not achieving success - 'अऽनाम्याच्छादये चाहं यथा कुपुरुषस्तथा | अमर्षं धारयं चोगं निनीषुः कालापर्ययम्|| अमर्षणः स्वाः प्रकृतीरभिभूय परं स्थितः | क्लेपान्मुमुक्षुः परजान्स वै पुरुष उच्यते || संतोषो वै श्रियं हन्ति ह्यभिमानं च भारत | अनुक्रोशभयं चोभे यैर्वृतो नाऽनुते महत्|| न मां प्रीणाति मद्भुक्तं श्रियं दृष्ट्वा युधिष्ठिरे | अति ज्वलन्तीं कौन्तेयं विवर्णकरणीं मम ||'. *Pandavas* are progressing while *Kauaravas* are regressing. Therefore, he tells his father that unless he gets wealth like *Yudhishthira* he will not have peace of mind. Either he will have it by defeating the enemies or die in their hands. What use is living, when enemy is progressing and he is regressing staying steady - 'अप्राप्य पाण्डवैश्वर्यं शमो मम न विद्यते | अवाप्स्ये वा रणे वाणैः शयिष्ये व हतः परैः || एतादृशस्य मे किं नु जीवितेन परंतप | वर्धन्ते पाण्डवा राजन्वयं हि स्थिनवृद्धयः || '.

Shakuni assures *Duryodhana* that he can have wealth and prosperity like *Pandavas* and he has a plan for possessing it. Since he is well versed in playing the game of dice, he will surely win on his behalf and all that he has to do is to see that *Dhritarashtra* invites *Yudhishthira* to play the game. *Dhritarashtra* is cautious preferring to take *Vidura's* advice which *Duryodhana* dissuades saying that *Vidura* is sure to refuse, if the father does not approve then he will surely give up his life. With his death the father can live happily with *Vidura* - 'निवर्तयिष्यति त्वासौ यदि क्षत्ता समेष्यति | निवृत्ते त्वयि राजेन्द्र मरिष्येऽहमसंशयम्|| स त्व मयि मृते राजन्विदुरेण सुखी भव | भोक्ष्यसे पृथिवीं कृत्स्नां किं मया त्वं करिष्यसि ||'.

When asked for his suggestion *Vidura* does not approve but attached to his son, *Dhritarashtra* overrules saying that a mere game would not create dissensions among them so long *Bhishma*, *Drona* and he himself are there to restrain *Duryodhana's* transience. Even then calling his son aside, he expresses fear that the game would bring discord, instead why should he not be satisfied with what he has. But *Duryodhana* is inconsolable, declaring that a person who is not displeased seeing his enemies wealthy is surely a loathsome person. Little wealth does not satisfy him seeing *Yudhishthira* roll in splendour 'न मां प्रीणाति राजेन्द्र लक्ष्मीः साधारणी विभो | ज्वलितामिव कौन्तेय श्रियं दृष्ट्वा च विव्यथे || सर्वां च पृथिवीं चैव युधिष्ठिरवशानुगाम्| स्थिरोऽस्मि योऽहं जीवामि दुःखादेतत्ब्रवीमि ते ||'.

Dhritarashtra with his usual wavering mind advises his son that he should not hate because hatred causes great trouble. As his brothers, *Pandavas* could be like your shoulders. do not cut them off. Their wealth is as good as yours. Your grandfathers are same as theirs 'बाहूनिवैतान्मा छेत्सीः पाण्डुपुत्रास्तथैव ते | भ्रातृणां तद्धनार्थं वै मित्रद्रोहं च मा कुरु || पाण्डोः पुत्रान् मात्द्विषस्वेह राजंस्तथैव ते भ्रातृधन समग्रम्| मित्रद्रोहे तात महानधर्मः पितामहा ये तव तेऽपि तेषाम्||'. *Duryodhana* being exceedingly obscured by greed and hatred is in no mood for any reasonable or rational thinking. He protests that one who has no intelligence of his own and only listens too much what others say does not know the wisdom like the husk which knows no the sweetness of the grain. His father is too much dependent on *Vidura* like boat tied by a rope not caring to see the things which are favourable for one's own self 'यस्य नास्ति निजा प्रज्ञा केवलं तु बहुश्रुतः | न स जानाति शास्त्रार्थं दर्वीह सूपरसानिव || जानन्वै मोहयसि मा नावि नौरिव संयता | स्वार्थे किं नावधानं ते उताहो द्वेष्टि मां भवान् ||' *Vidura* is not favourable to him as much as he is to *Pandavas* 'पाण्डवानां हितं युक्तो न तथा मम कौरव ||'. Disease and death does not wait for one to earn sufficient wealth, therefore, one should make every effort when one is able 'न व्याधयो नापि यमः प्राप्तुं श्रेयः प्रतीक्षते | यावदेव भवेत्कल्पस्तावच्छ्रेयः समाचरेत्||'.

Finally tired of his son's obdurate behaviour, *Dhritarashtra* tells him that if his words are not palatable to him, he may do as he wishes, reminding him however to be cautious, lest he may have occasion to regret because his intention is not righteousness 'वाक्यं न मे रोचते यत्त्वयोक्तं यत्ते प्रियं तत्क्रियतां नरेन्द्र | पश्चात्तप्स्यसे तदुपाकम्य वाक्यं न हीदृशं भावि वचो हि धर्म्यम्||'. With helplessness writ large on his face he asks *Vidura* to

extend the invitation to *Pandavas* to participate in the game. *Vidura* makes a last minute effort remarking that he cannot congratulate *Dhritarashtra* saying it is sure to lead to dissensions between cousins 'नाभिनन्दे नृपते प्रैषमेन्नं मैवं कृथाः कुलनाशाद्विभेमि | पुत्रैर्भिन्नैः कलहस्ते ध्रुवं स्यादेनच्छङ्के द्यूतकृते नरेन्द्र ||'.

Yudhishthira himself is a complex personality, not stranger to धर्म is often confused in application of his ideals. When *Vidura* approaches him with the invitation, *Yudhishthira* remarks that the game causes disagreements and dissentions, which no wise one would encourage. If, however, *Vidura* thinks it proper then he will certainly accept 'द्यूते चतः कलहो विद्यते नः को वै द्यूतं रोचयेद्बुध्यमानः | किं वा भवान्मन्यते युक्तरूपं भवद्वाक्ये सर्व एव स्थिताः स्म ||'. He accepts his view but having been sent by Dhritarashtra he is extending the invitation. But when his brothers express doubts, *Yudhishthira* justifies as any gambler would do, saying that he cannot refuse the invitation from *King* - 'न चाकामः शकुनिना देविताहं न चेन्मां जिष्णुराह्वयिता सभायाम्| आहूतोऽहं न निवर्ते कदाचित्तदाहितं शाश्वतं वै व्रतं मे ||'. His response was not appreciated even by *Vaishampayana* while narrating the incident much later to *Janamejaya*. He makes an eloquent observation that even as one seeing brilliant light becomes blinded, *Yudhishthira* has lost his sight attributing it to divine *Will* 'दैवं हि प्रज्ञां चक्षुस्तेज इवापतत्| धातुश्च वशमन्वेति पाशैरिव नरः स्थितः ||' and as if if struck with blindness, departs to *Hastinapura* with his brothers.

The game of dice is an important watershed, the forces of *Darkness* taking lead and overwhelming the forces of *Light* unfolding the events to their logical conclusion, with luminous forces becoming obscured in mind, clarity of their mind becoming suspect, moral intentions subject lead to hesitant interludes. *Dhritarashtra* is hesitant in misconceived righteousness, *Duryodhana* desperate in his ego-centric intentions, *Shakuni* gloating with devious designs, *Dushasana* displaying demonic disposition, *Bhishma* and *Drona* known for righteousness sitting dumb as reluctant spectators, *Pandavas* confused and confounded by perceptions of the demands of righteousness, only *Vidura* raising his feeble voice in protestation, while all the rest observing passively as the events unfold as they are lead through every possible contours of degradation of human character, a great gamble of human values, appropriately designated as द्यूत पर्व.

At the outset, *Yudhishthira* reminds *Shakuni* that game of dice is one form of deceit, with neither chivalry nor the morality, then why does be entertain the same. Seers like *Devala* have declared the game as unrighteous and for *Kshatriya* war alone is suggested but since they have been invited they have not refused considering it to be *divine Intent* 'निकृतिर्देवनं पापं न क्षात्रोऽत्र पराक्रमः | न च नीतिर्ध्रुवा राजन्किं त्वं द्यूतं प्रशंससि || न हि मानं प्रशंसन्ति निकृतौ कितवस्य हि | शकुने मैव नो जैषीरमार्गेण नृशंसवत्||.. एवमाहायमसितो देवलो मुनिसत्तमः | इमानि लोकद्वाराणि यो वै भ्राम्यति सर्वदा || इदं वै देवनं पापं निकृत्या कितवैः सह | धर्मेण तु जयो युद्धे तत्परं न तु देवनम्|.. आहूतो न निवर्तेयमिति मे व्रतमाहितम्| विधिश्च बलवान्राजन्दिष्टस्यास्मि वशे स्थितः ||'. For *Shakuni* it was like strewing pearls before a swine, the game being only a ruse to humiliate and dispossess *Pandavas* before those who once bowed before him as a *samrat* assuring *Kauravas* with gratification of humbling his enemies.

Even as the game begins, *Duryodhana* announces that *Shakuni* will play for him and he will provide the necessary wager 'अहं दातास्मि रत्नानां धनानां च विशाम्पते | मदर्थे देविता चायं शकुनिर्मातुलो मम ||'. *Yudhishthira* points out that playing game of dice on behalf of some one else is not considered proper 'अन्येनान्यस्य वै द्यूत विषमं प्रतिभाति मे | एतद्विद्वन्नुपादत्स्व काममेवं प्रवर्तताम्||'but *Duryodhana's* intention being clear his protest was dismissed. The game proceeds with *Shakuni* winning every game with jubilant declaration that he has won, even as *Yudhishthira* points out that he has won through unrighteous manner, 'जितमित्येव शकुनिर्युधिष्ठिरमभाषत || मत्तः कैतवकेनैव यज्जितोऽस्मि दुरोदरे | शकुने हन्त दिव्यामो ग्लहमानाः परस्परम्||'. But his remarks leave no impression on *Shakuni* or *Duryodhana*, continuing the game with every move loaded heavily against *Yudhishthira*.

Seeing the wily *Shakuni* playing the game *Vidura* protests telling *Dhritarashtra* that what he speaks may not be palatable like medicine to one on the death bed, 'महाराज विजानीहि यत्त्वां वक्ष्यामि भारत | मुमूर्षो रौषधमिव न रोचेतापि ते श्रुतम्||', reminding him that having witnessed many bad omens on *Duryodhana's* birth, he is taking the family to destruction. He pleads with him to stop the game since it is better to disown one

for the family, the family for the town and the town for *Janapada*, and the whole world for the *self* 'त्यजेत्कुलार्थे पुरुषं ग्रामार्थे कुलं त्यजेत्ग्रामं जनपदस्यार्थे आत्मार्थे पृथिवीं त्यजेत्||'. *Duryodhana* taking shelter behind *Shakuni* is playing the game of dice, send him back to the mountains and allow the quarrel to end.

All advice from elders flows like water over stones. *Duryodhana* hearing these words bursts out in anger flaying *Vidura* that finding fault with him, he always speaks what is dear to his enemies. He asks him to keep quiet like others men of wisdom and not interfere and think himself to be the creator and redeemer speaking unpleasant words every time he opens his mouth, with unwanted advise and hurt them 'परंपामेव यशसा श्लाघसे त्वं सदा क्षत्तः कुत्सयन्धार्तराष्ट्रान्| जानीमहे विदुर यत्प्रियत्वं बालानिवास्मानवमन्यसे नित्यमेव ||..मा नोऽवमंस्था विद्म मनस्त्वेदं शिक्षस्व बुद्धिं स्थविराणां सकाशात्| यशो रक्षस्व विदुर सम्प्रणीतं मा व्यापृतः परकार्येषु भूस्त्वम्||.. अहं कर्तेति विदुर मा च मंस्था मानो नित्यं परुषाणीह वोचः | न त्वां पृच्छामि विदुर यद्धितं मे स्वस्ति क्षत्तर्मा तितिक्षून्क्षिणु त्वम्||'.

Vidura responds quietly saying that in the evil world speakers of pleasant words are plenty but rare is he who listens even when harsh words are spoken. Only he who remaining righteously inclined advises his master is the real advisor 'लभ्यते खलु पापीयान्नरो नु प्रियवागिह | अप्रियस्य हि पथ्यस्य वक्ता श्रोता च दुर्लभः || यस्तु धर्मपरश्च स्याद्धित्वा भर्तुः प्रियाप्रिये | अप्रियाण्याह पथ्यानि तेन राजा सहायवान्||'. He is desirous that the descendents of *Vichitravirya*, *Dhritarashtra* and his sons be endowed with wealth and prosperity. But *Duryodhana* desires to live as he behaves, let that be so. Sincerely however he would like to tell that wise one should irritate those serpents which spew poison from eyes and tongues - 'वैचित्रवीर्यस्य यशो धनं च वाञ्छाम्यहं सहपुत्रस्य शश्वत्| यथा तथा तेऽस्तु नमश्च तेऽस्तु ममापि च स्वस्ति दिशन्तु विप्राः || आशीविषान्नेत्रविषान्कोपयेन्न च पण्डितः | एवं तेऽहं वदामीदं प्रयतः कुरुनन्दन ||'.

The game proceeds like irreversible wheels of *Time*, *Shakuni* winning every game and *Yudhishthira* losing wealth, kingdom and possessions one after another, finally his brothers and even himself. Nothing remains to be placed as wager, till *Shakuni* sarcastically reminds him that he has still one valuable possession, *Draupadi*, 'अस्ति ते वै प्रिया राजन्ग्लह एकोऽपराजितः | पणस्व कृष्णां पाञ्चालीं तयाऽऽत्मानं पुनर्जय ||'. *Yudhishthira*, like one having lost all sense of discrimination wagers *Draupadi* describing her as one neither short nor long, neither dark nor fair, with dark curly hair - 'नैव ह्रस्वा न महती न कृष्णा नाति रोहिणी | नीलकुञ्चितकेशीच तया दीव्याम्यहं त्वया ||' to the surprise and horror of the assembled people, who fear worst to come. *Bhisma*, *Drona* and *Kripa* sit benumbed, sweating profusely. *Vidura* buries his head in his palm and others breathe with difficulty. *Bhishma, Asavatthama* and others breathed heavy like huge serpents with their heads bowed down and rubbing their hands. Only *Dhritarashtra*, blind to every thing that is transpiring around him, seems to be excited with the events asking repeatedly '*Are we winning, are we winning?*'. Unable to contain their pleasure, *Karna* and *Dushasana* openly revel even as others shed tears - 'एवमुक्ते तु वचने धर्मराजेन धीमता | धिग्धिगित्येव वृद्धानां सभ्यानां निःसृता गिरः ||.. भीष्मद्रोणकृपादीना स्वेदश्च समजायत || शिरो गृहीत्वा विदुरो गतसत्व इवाभवत्| आस्ते ध्यायन्नधोवक्त्रो निःश्वसन्निव पन्नगः || द्रौणिर्भूरिश्रवाश्चैव युयुत्सुर्धार्तराष्ट्रजः | हस्तौ पिंषन्नधोवक्त्रा निःश्वसन्त इवोरगाः || धृतराष्ट्रस्तु तं हृष्टः पर्यपृच्छत्पुनः पुनः | किं जितं किं जितमिति ह्याकारं नाभ्यरक्षत || जहर्ष कर्णोऽतिभृशं सह दुःशासनादिभिः | इतरेषां तु सभ्यानां नेत्रेभ्यः प्रापतज्जलम्||'.

The climax comes when *Shakuni* announces that he has won her also and becomes excited with indecent show 'सौबलस्त्वभिधायैवं जितकाशी मदोत्कटः | जितमित्येव तानक्षान् पुनरेवान्वपद्यत ||'. Seeing this *Duryodhana* asks *Vidura* to bring *Draupadi* from the inner chambers to the assembly saying that she will now sweep as a slave the corridors of his palace 'एहि क्षत्तर्द्रौपदीमानयस्व प्रियां भार्यां सम्मतां पाण्डवानाम्| सम्मार्जतां वेश्म परैतु शीघ्रं तत्रास्तु दासीभिरपुण्यशीला ||'. Shocked and reluctant to be part of such brazen act *Vidura* refuses to do so saying that *Draupadi* can never be a slave and *Yudhishthira* having lost himself in the game earlier had no right to offer her in wager 'न हि दासीत्वमापन्ना कृष्णा भवितुमर्हति | अनीशेन हि राज्ञैषा पणे न्यस्तेति मे मतिः ||'. But *Duryodhana* is in no mood to quibble on morality and refuses to accept *Vidura's* statement and sends a messenger instead to fetch her, assuring him that he need not worry about *Pandavas*.

When the attendant approaches her, a surprised *Draupadi* questions himer angrily which husband would offer his wife as wager? Has *Yudhisthira* lost his discrimination that he has placed on wager ? 'कथं त्वेवं वदसि प्रातिकामिन्को हि दीव्येद्भार्यया राजपुत्र | मूढो राजा द्यूतमदेन मत्तो ह्यभून्नान्यत्कैतवमस्य किंचित्||'. Then she asks him to go and ask *Yudhishthira* whether she was lost earlier or after he had lost himself 'गच्छ त्वं कितवं गत्वा सभायां

पृच्छ मूनज | किं नु पूर्वं पराजैषीरात्मानमथवा नु माम्||'. *Yudhishthira* had no words to utter and keeps quiet with his head bowed down 'युधिष्ठिरस्तु निश्चेता गतसत्व इवाभवत्| न तं सूतं प्रत्युवाच वचनं साध्वसाधु वा ||'.

Duryodhana shouts at the attendant to go and tell Draupadi and ask the question herself here in the assembly hall. *Draupadi*, however, sends him back again to ask the *Kuru* elders what should she do now since they are known as righteous people - 'धर्मं त्वेकं परमं प्राह लोके स नः शमं धास्यति गोप्यमानः || सोऽयं धर्मो मात्यगात्कौरवान्वै सभ्यान् गत्वा पृच्छ धर्म्यं वचो मे | ते मां ब्रूयुर्निश्चितं तत्करिष्ये धर्मात्मनो नीतिमन्तो वरिष्ठाः ||'. Elders sit benumbed are stunned to silence. Seeing that no one was speaking, *Duryodhana* sends *Dushasana* to bring her forcibly saying the *Suta* is frightened of *Bhima* 'दुःशासनैष मम पाण्डुपुत्रो वृकोदराद्उद्विजतेऽल्पचेतसा | स्वयं प्रगृह्यानय याज्ञसेनीं किं ते करिष्यन्त्यवशाः सपत्नाः ||'. *Dushasana* undertakes the task with extreme pleasure telling her that *since* she is now their slave she should without feeling any shame serve *Duryodhana* as her Lord and master - 'एह्येहि पाञ्चालि जितासि कृष्णे दुर्योधनं पश्य विमुक्तलज्जा | कुरून्भजस्वायतपत्रनेत्रे धर्मेण लब्धासि सभां परैहि ||'.

This was too much to bear for *Draupadi* who was proud as wife of the *Pandavas*, as sister of *Drishtadhyumna* and above all well disposed friend of *Krishna*. She was not an ordinary lady but extra-ordinary fragment of resplendent *Shree*, created by *Shiva* himself born in *Drupada's* family but not in human womb, attractive to people, fragrant to smell and best descended in the worlds - 'श्रीरेपा द्रौपदीरूपा त्वदर्थे मानुषं गता | अयोनिजा लोककान्ता पुण्यगन्धा युधिष्ठिर || रत्यर्थं भवतां ह्येपा निर्मिता शूलपाणिना | द्रुपदस्य कुले जाता भवद्भिश्चोपजीविता ||' born to *Drupada* capable of defeating *Drona* and the *Kshatriyas* - 'सर्वयोषिद्वरा कृष्णां निनीषुः क्षत्रियान्क्षयम्|| सुरकार्यमियं काले करिष्यति समध्यमा | अस्या हेतोः कौरवाणां महदुत्पस्यते भयम्||'. Therefore, she speaks with all vehemence that righteousness and valour in *Kuru family* is certainly lost since even seeing *Dharma* breached they sit unmoved by her plight 'धिगस्तु नष्टः खलु भारतानां धर्मस्तथा क्षत्रविदां च वृत्तम्| यत्र ह्यतीतां कुरुधर्मवेलां प्रेक्षन्ति सर्वे कुरवः सभायाम्||'. She wonders whether, *Bhishma* and *Drona* who were sitting as if cast in marble, have lost their moral mandate that they allow *Duryodhana* to shame the daughter in law of the family 'द्रोणस्य भीष्मस्य च नास्ति सत्वं क्षत्तुस्तथैवास्य महात्मनोऽपि | राजस्तथा हीममधर्मुग्रं न लक्षयन्ते कुरुवृद्धमुख्याः ||'

The times were so bad that even *Bhishma,* who was always resolute in righteousness, for once appeared as obscure, confused and helpless to reply her. He pontifically tells her that *Dharma* is subtle at the same time he seems to be shifting responsibility on hapless *Yudhishthira* saying it is normal practice to consider a woman as possession of her husband and yet having lost in wager every thing that he possessed even his own self he is of the opinion cannot offer her as wager. Yet being wise in धर्म *Yudhishthira* would not never stray away from righteousness and having himself confirmed that he is defeated, he cannot comment of this matter - 'न धर्मसौक्ष्म्यात्सुभगे विवेक्तुं शक्नोमि ते प्रश्नमिमं यथावत्| अस्वाम्यशक्तः पणितुं परस्वं स्त्रियाश्च भर्तुवशतां समीक्ष्य || त्यजेत सर्वांपृथिवीं समृद्धां युधिष्ठिरो धर्ममथो न जह्यात्| उक्तं जितोऽस्मि च पाण्डवेन तस्मान्न शक्नोमि विवेक्तुमेतत्||'.

Bhishma is in an enviable position having to act in situations with conflicting allegiance. He was prime instrument who saw that the *Kuru* dynasty would not end when his step brothers died without any issue. He prevailed *Vyasa* to be the surrogate father for the next generation of *Kurus*. Having taken such bold steps earlier, he was no confused when *Draupadi* asked for his decision in strange circumstances when two sections of the family are fighting on a problem, which no one earlier could have faced. Proud of his family, yet advanced in age, these problems baffled him, seeing no one from his next generation picking up the baton from him. Thus hurt and obscured in his mind with the poisoned arrow sticking in his mind, with no strength to remove it, *Bhishma's* agony becomes more acute when we see him as one intellectually superior and spiritually advanced, yet had not the spiritual strength to rise above his temporal situation. Though the authors gave a new slant to his character saying that *danavas*, the forces of *Darkness*, having foretold *Duryodhana* that they would enter *Bhishma's* mind and obscure it, 'भीष्मद्रोणकृपादींश्च प्रवेश्यन्त्यपरेऽसुराः | यैराविष्टा घृणां त्यक्त्वा योत्स्यन्ते तव वैरिभिः || .. प्रहरिष्यन्ति विवशाः स्नेहमुत्सृज्य दूरतः | दृष्टाः पुरुषशार्दूलाः कलुषीकृतमानसाः | अविज्ञानविमूढाश्च दैवाच्च विधिनिर्मितात्||', one cannot but be conscious of the human face behind his inability to be consciously clear his mind of sermons of righteousness, taking sheepishly shelter behind unconvincing protestations that since धर्म is subtle, he is not able to speak and *Yudhishthira*

being the very embodiment must have applied धर्म rightly - 'न धर्मसांक्ष्म्यात्सुभगे विवेक्तुशक्नोमि ते प्रश्नमिमं यथावत्| अस्वाम्यशक्तः पणितुं परस्वं स्त्रियाश्च भर्तुर्वशतां समक्ष्य || त्यजेत सर्वां पृथिवीं समृद्धां युधिष्ठिरो धर्ममथो न जह्यात्| ऊक्तं जितोऽस्मीति च पाण्डवोऽन तस्मान्न शक्नोमि विवेक्तुमेतत्||'. Submission to *divine intent* and *purpose* is absolute even for great souls yet in moments of weakness every one in inclined to doubts, delusion and disillusion, seeking refuge in platitudes.

Therefore, even as *Dushasana* was pulling her by her hair addressing her, *slave, slave, Karna* laughing at her helplessness and *Shakuni* encouraging him and Except for *Duryodhana, Karna, Dushasana* and *Shakuni* all others were aghast seeing *Draupadi* is being dragged in such despicable manner. Seeing none of her husbands would move a muscle to protect her honour even with *Drishtadhyumna* near, *Draupadi* beseeched *Krishna* in desperation to come and deliver her from the humiliation 'कृष्णं च जिष्णुं च हरिं नरं च | त्राणाय विक्रोशति याज्ञसेनी ||' expressing her anguish and helplessness.

Seeing the events transpiring before his very eyes *Bhima* bursts out that he did not object all wealth and possessions being placed as wager, since *Yudhishthira* is the lord of all that they possess, but in placing *Draupadi* as wager, trespassing all norms could not be tolerated since even a dishonorable gambler would not place maid servant as one. Having caused her misfortune he asks *Sahadeva* to bring fire so that the hand that played the game may be burnt - 'भवन्ति गेहे बन्धक्यः कितवानां युधिष्ठिर | न ताभिरुत दीव्यन्ति दया चैवास्ति तास्वपि || न च मे तत्र कोपोऽभूत सर्वस्येशो नो भवान्| इमं त्वतिक्रमं मन्ये द्रौपदी यत्र पण्यते ||..अस्याः कृते मन्युरयं त्वयि राजन्निपात्यते | बाहू ते सम्प्रधक्ष्यामि सहदेवाग्निमानय ||'. *Bhima's* anger could only be restrained by *Arjuna* pointing him that he has never reacted in this manner any time earlier, which surely must have been due to the actions of the enemies. Then he cautions him that the enemies should not take advantage of this lapse 'न पुरा भीमसेन त्वमीदृशीर्वदिता गिरः | परैस्ते नाशितं नूनं नृशंसैर्धर्मगौरवम्||'. Thus restrained *Bhima* gives up his anger.

At this moment a strange glimmer of righteousness rises among the dark forces of evil minded *Kauravas*. *Vikarna* reminds his elders that unless they reply *Draupadi's* query he fears that all will go to perdition - 'अविवेकेन वाक्यस्य नरकः सद्य एव नः |', knowing that *Draupadi* is married to all the *Pandavas*, therefore *Yudhishthira* alone has no right to place her as wager. Further having lost himself first, he is not free to wager any further. Therefore, *Kauravas* can not be said to have won her over. Hearing this unexpected protest, the assembly becomes exited and blames *Shakuni*. *Karna* pulls *Vikarna* aside admonishing him not to be the cause of family's displeasure. Since all have accepted that she has been won righteously he should not speak like a wise one though a mere child 'एते न किंचिदप्याहुश्चोदिता ह्यपि कृष्णया | धर्मेण विजितामेता मन्यन्ते द्रुपदात्मजाम्|| त्वं तु केवलबाल्येन धार्तराष्ट्र विदीर्यसे | यद्ब्रवीषि सभामध्ये बालः स्थविरभाषितम्||'.

Then *Dushasana* started pulling *Draupadi's* garments again, which makes her to recall *Krishna* 'ततो दुःशासनो राजन्द्रौपद्या वसनं बलात् | सभामध्ये समाक्षिप्य व्यपाक्रष्टुं प्रचक्रमे || आकृष्यमाणे वसने द्रौपद्याश्चिन्तितो हरिः |' *Draupadi* recalls what *Vashishtha* had said in earlier times that if one yearns for *Hari* in times of distress, he is sure to come to their assistance. Therefore, she calls him to offer his succor and refuge referring him as *Govind* and *Krishna* - 'गोविन्देति समाभाष्य कृष्णेति पुनः पुनः | मनसा चिन्तयामास देवं नारायण प्रभुम्|| आपत्स्वभयद कृष्ण लोकाना प्रपितामहम्| गोविन्द द्वारकावासिन्कृष्ण गोपिजनप्रिय || कौरवैः परिभूतां मां किं न जानासि केशव | हे नाथ हे रमानाथ व्रजनाथार्तिनाशन | कौरवार्णवमग्ना मामुद्धरस्व जनार्दन || कृष्ण कृष्ण महायोगिन्विश्वात्मन्विश्वभावन | प्रपन्नं पाहि गोविन्द कुरुमध्येऽवसीदतीम्||'. *Krishna* listens to her pleadings from far off *Dvaraka* and assuming his unmanifest *form*, covers *Draupadi* with beautifully coloured garments, making more and more clothes appear on her body even as earlier ones were removed by *Dushnasana* 'याज्ञसेन्यां वचः श्रुत्वा कृष्णो गह्वरितोऽभवत्| त्यक्त्वा शय्याऽऽसनं पद्भ्यां कृपालुः कृपयाभ्यगात्|| कृष्णं च जिष्णुं च हरिं नरं च त्राणाय विक्रोशति याज्ञसेनी | ततस्तु धर्मोऽन्तरितो महात्मा समावृणोद्वै विविधैः सुवस्त्रैः || आकृष्यमाणे वसने द्रौपद्यास्तु विशाम्पते | तद्रूपमपरं वस्त्रं प्रादुरासीदनेकशः ||'.

An interesting anecdote, not available in *Mahabharata*, gained popular credence in later days under the impudence of *Bhakti* movment relating to this incident. It is said that when *Draupadi* was thus being humiliated, *Krishna* was sitting with *Rukmini* in *Dvaraka*; he rose up promptly and rushed but even as he reached the threshold, he stopped returning to his seat. *Rukmini* perplexed by his strange behaviour, asked him where was he about to go and why did he restrained from going. *Krishna* reply was significant; he was going to *Draupadi* because she in distress, was seeking his help earnestly. But

when she covered her breasts to protect herself from humiliation, on her own, he returned. It was only when she saw *Dushasana* relentlessly pulling her clothes, she surrendered to *Krishna* with complete helplessness and without any reservations pleading for his grace that he rushed there to cover her with innumerable clothes and defeating *Dushasana's* evil designs. When human beings bow their heads in submissions, it is their body, the *form* that bends. शरणागति is bending the *essence*, mind, speech and the actions *wholly, completely* and in *entirety* along with the *form*. which alone brings the significance of the *Krishna's* celebrated assurance 'मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु | मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ||'. भक्ति is being in communion with *Krishna* not being विभक्त from him only when one shall come unto him, having him as the supreme goal 'मामेवैष्यसि युक्त्वैवमात्मानं मत्परायणः ||'.

Even as the dastardly act was being performed by *Dushasana,* inauspicious voices are heard. Seeing the inauspicious omens, frightened people praise *Draupadi* and blame *Dhritarashtra's* sons 'ततो हलहलाशब्दास्तत्रासीद्घोरदर्शनः | तदद्भुततमं लोको वीक्ष्य सर्वे महीभृतः | शशंसुर्द्रौपदीं तत्र कुत्सन्तो धृतराष्ट्रम्||. The seeds of the great battle between *Pandavas* and *Kauravas* were sown at that very moment, forcing *Bhima* to take his vow to kill *Dushasana* and drink his blood शशाप तत्र भीमस्तु राजमध्ये बृहत्स्वनः | क्रोधाद्विस्फुरमाणोष्ठो विनिष्पिष्य करे करम्|| इदं मे वाक्यमादध्वं क्षत्रिया लोकवासिनः | नोक्तपूर्वं नरैरन्यैर्न चान्यो यद्वदिष्यति || यद्येतदेवमुक्त्वाहं न कुर्यां पृथिवीश्वराः | पितामहानां पूर्वेषां नाहं गतिमवाप्नुयाम्|| अस्य पापस्य दुर्भुजस्य भरतापसदस्य च | न पिबेयं बलाद्वक्षो भित्त्वा चेद्रुधिरं युधि ||'.

At this stage *Vidura* reminds the assembled people that *Draupadi's* query still remains unanswered and keeping silent is as good as supporting a lie 'द्रौपदी प्रश्नमुक्त्वैवं रोरवीति ह्यनाथवत्| न च विब्रूत तं प्रश्नं सभ्या धर्मोऽत्र पीड्यते ||..यो हि प्रश्नं न विब्रूयाद्धर्मदर्शी सभां गतः | अनृते या फलावाप्तिस्तस्याः सोऽर्धं समश्नुते ||'. Having gained confidence in her own self with *Krishna's* miraculous intervention, *Draupadi* defiantly reminds the *Kuru* elders that they have not replied her query and never ever were noble ladies were called to appear in open assembly, which ancient tradition *Kauravas* have this day destroyed. How else could any one else would have dared to bring in an open assembly calling her a *slave*, one who is married to *Pandavas*, a sister to *Drishtadhyumna* and affectionate to *Vasudeva.* As *Yudhishthira's* wife and born in a great family would she deserve to be called a *slave?* Therefore, she would like to hear from them whether she has been won or not 'धर्म्यां स्त्रियं सभां पूर्वं न नयन्तीति नः श्रुतम्| स नष्टः कौरवेयेषु पूर्वो धर्मः सनातनः || कथं हि भार्या पाण्डूनां पार्षतस्य स्वसा सती | वासुदेवस्य च सखी पार्थिवानां सभामिमाम्|| तामिमां धर्मराजस्य भार्यां सदृशवर्णजाम्| ब्रूत दासीमदासीं वा तत्करिष्यामि कौरवाः || जितां वाप्यजितां वापि मन्यध्वं मां यथा नृपाः | तथा प्रत्युक्तमिच्छामि तत् करिष्यामि कौरवाः ||'.

Kuru elders had no words to speak, *Bhishma* conceding meekly that however much a person may know of righteousness, the week end up accepting as righteousness which they are told to be righteousness - 'बलवांश्च यथा धर्मं लोके पश्यति पूरुषः | स धर्मो धर्मवेलायां भवत्यभिहतः परः || न विवेक्तुं च ते प्रश्नमिमं शक्नोमि निश्चयात्| सूक्ष्मत्वाद्गहनत्वाच्च कार्यस्यास्य च गौरवात्||'. Mourning the decline and destruction of *Kuru* family and *Kauravas* sunk in greed and attachment he is pleased that *Pandavas* and *Draupadi* have not strayed away from righteousness even in adversity - 'नूनमन्तः कुलस्यायं भविता नचिरादिव | तथा हि कुरवः सर्वे लोभमोहपरायणः || कुलेषु जाताः कल्याणि व्यसनैराहता भृशम्| धर्म्यान्मार्गान्न च्यवन्ते येषां नस्त्वं वधूः स्थिता || उपपन्नं च पाञ्चालि तवेदं वृत्तमीदृशम्| यत्कृच्छ्रमपि सम्प्राप्ता धर्ममेवान्ववेक्षसे ||'. Then he makes a strange suggestion, if not a face saving one, that *Drona* and others having remained silent and spiritless only *Yudhishthira* can speak which is धर्म whether she has won or lost 'एते द्रोणादयश्चैव वृद्धा धर्मविदो जनाः | शून्यैः शरीरैस्तिष्ठन्ति गतासव इवानताः | युधिष्ठिरस्तु प्रश्नेऽस्मिन्प्रमाणमिति मे मतिः | अजितां वा जितां वेति स्वयं व्याहर्तुमर्हति ||'.

Echoing *Bhishma's* words and seeing others hanging their head without uttering any words, *Duryodhana* slyly and shrewdly refers *Yudhishthira* as one established in righteousness, son of righteousness and thought to be like *Indra* 'धर्मे स्थितो धर्मसुतो महात्मा स्वयं चेदं कथयत्विन्द्रकल्पः' and says that she has to accept one or the other fact, having left to *Yudhishthira* him to say whether it was righteous or not for him to have offered her as wager, his brothers having held hi statement as not the truth - 'अनीश्वरं विब्रुवन्त्वार्यमध्ये युधिष्ठिरं तव पाञ्चालि हेतोः | कुर्वन्तु सर्वे चानृतं धर्मराजं पाञ्चालि त्वं मोक्ष्यसे दासभावात्|| धर्मे स्थितो धर्मसुतो महात्मा स्वयं चेदं कथयत्विन्द्रकल्पः | ईशो वा ते ह्यनीशोऽथ वैष वाक्यादस्य क्षिप्रमेकं भजस्व ||'. Those in the assembly, perhaps without realizing the trickery in his words, expressed surprise and praised him turning to *Yudhishthira* with eager expectation, 'श्रुत्वा तु वाक्यं

मुमनोहरं तद्दर्पश्चासीन्कौरवाणां सभायाम्| सर्वे चासन्पार्थिवाः प्रीतिमन्तः कुरुश्रेष्ठं धार्मिकं पूजयन्तः || युधिष्ठिरं च ते सर्वे समुदैक्षन्त पार्थिवाः | किं नु वक्ष्यति धर्मज्ञ इति साचीकृताननाः ||'. Every one was surprised that *Yudhishthira* should remain quiet when *Arjuna* and *Bhima* were speaking.

It was too much for *Bhima* to see his brother being thus humiliated; therefore, he angrily tells the assembled people that if they had not respected *Yudhisthira* like their own father and head of the *Pandavas*, they would not have tolerated this humiliation. He is the lord of merits, austerity and life. Even if he accepts that before *Draupadi* was offered as wager he had not lost himself, then they would all accept having lost in the game. Otherwise, no one traversing this earth would ever live having touched *Draupadi's* tresses. He is bound out of respect for his brother and having been prevented by Arjuna. Seeing him getting angry *Bhishma*, *Drona* and *Vidura* restrain him.

Karna tells her solicitously to forget *Pandavas* and be ready to accept slavery under *Kauravas*, saying 'प्रविश्य राज्ञः परिवारं भजस्व तत्ते कार्यं शिष्टमादिश्यतेऽत्र | ईशास्तु सर्वे तव राजपुत्रि भवन्ति वै धार्तराष्ट्रा न पार्थाः |'. *Duryodhana* continues to berate *Yudhishthira* to reply whether *Draupadi* is lost or not in the game, exposing to *Draupadi* his well-formed thigh like banana stump and like the trunk of an elephant 'प्रश्नं ब्रूहि च कृष्णा त्वमजितां यदि मन्यसे || एवमुक्त्वा तु कौन्तेयमपोह्य वसनं स्वकम् | स्मयन्निवेक्ष्य पाञ्चालीमैश्वर्यमदमोहितः || कदलीदण्डसदृशं सर्वलक्षणसंयुतम्| गजहस्तप्रतीकाशं वज्रप्रतिमगौरवम्|| . . द्रौपद्याः प्रेक्षमाणायाः सव्यमूरुमदर्शयत्||' Seeing this insulting display, *Bhima* vows to break that thigh in the battle 'पितृभिः सह सालोक्यं मा स्म गच्छेद्वृकोदरः | यद्येतमूरुं गदया न भिन्द्यां ते महाहवे ||'. Seeing the indecent display, *Vidura* warns *Kauaravas* not to transgress limits of righteousness, which will bring nothing but ruin to their family even as *Dhritarashtra* scolds his son for becoming unnecessarily hard and vile.

Even as terrible vows were being declared, an ass enters *Dhritarashtra's* sacrificial hall and started braying, all other asses and animals and birds joining the refrain. When *Gandhari* and *Vidura* hears this tumult became saddened prevailing upon *Dhritarashtra* to reconsider the penalty. *Dhritarashtra* becomes cowed down by the events and asks *Draupadi* to receive any boon 'वरं वृणीष्व पाञ्चालि मत्तो यदभिवाञ्छसि | वधूनां हि विशिष्टा मे त्वं धर्मपरमा सती ||'. A great and wise lady thatshe is, the first boon which she asks isf for *Yudhishthira* being released from slavery so that her may not be called *slaves* 'ददासि चेद्वरं मह्यं वृणोमि भरतर्षभ | सर्वधर्मानुगः श्रीमानदासोऽस्तु युधिष्ठिरः || मनस्विनमजानन्तो मैव ब्रूयुः कुमारकाः | एष वै दासपुत्रो हि प्रतिविन्ध्यं ममात्मजम्|| राजपुत्रः पुरा भूत्वा यथा नान्यः पुमान्क्वचित्| राजभिर्लालितास्यास्य न युक्ता दासपुत्रता ||'. Out of belated remorse for the agony and indignity suffered by *Draupadi*, he asks her to seek another boon, whereupon she requests the release of *Yudhishthira* and his brothers from bondage. Pleased by her requests, *Dhritarashtra* prompts her to ask yet another boon, whereupon the proud क्षत्र woman replies that it is not proper to be greedy 'लोभो धर्मस्य नाशाय भगवन्नाहमुत्सहे | अनर्हा वरमादातुं तृतीयं राजसत्तम ||'.

For once *Karna* is struck by *Draupadi's* noble response and praises her fortitude when other *Pandavas* including *Kunti* were despondent. He admiringly speaks that he has not heard of any other woman responding in such gracious manner. When *Pandavas* and *Kauravas* were angry with each other, it was she who serenity among *Pandavas*. When *Pandavas* were sinking in the stormy weather, she was the boat that transported them 'या नः श्रुता मनुष्येषु स्त्रीयो रूपेण सम्मताः | तासामेतादृशं कर्म न कस्याः चन शुश्रुम || क्रोधाविष्टेषु पार्थेषु धार्तराष्ट्रेषु चाप्यति | द्रौपदी पाण्डुपुत्राणां कृष्णा शान्तिरिहाभवत्|| अप्लवेऽम्भसि मग्नानामप्रतिष्ठे निमज्जताम्| पाञ्चाली पाण्डुपुत्राणां नौरेषा पारगाभवत्||'.

Hearing these condescending words spoken by *Karna*, *Bhima* exclaims in agony, ***'Alas, a time has come when Pandavas had to be saved by a woman'***. Seer *Devala* had said only three things illumine a family, progeny, actions and wisdom. By touching her, *Dushasana* has rendered her inauspicious, destroying our progeny, wondering with *Arjuna* of what use would be progeny from such union - 'स्त्रीगतिः पाण्डुपुत्राणामित्युवाच दुर्मनाः || त्रीणि ज्योतींषि पुरुष इति वै देवलोऽब्रवीत्| अपत्यं कर्म विद्या च यतः सृष्टाः प्रजास्ततः ||..तन्नो ज्योतिरभिहतं दाराणामभिमर्शनात्| धनंजय कथंस्वित्स्यादपत्यमभिमृष्टजम् ||'. *Arjuna* hearing these words consoles him saying that he should not have such thoughts as far as *Draupadi* is concerned *Dushasana* is undoubtedly a mean person but wise ones do not have all the answers to reply such one, 'नचैवोक्ता न चानुक्ता हीनतः परुषा गिरः | भारत प्रतिजल्पन्ति सदा तूत्तमपूरुषाः ||'. *Bhima*, however does allow the matter to rest there, furiously bursting out that he will kill all these

perpetrators of evil, 'इहैवेम्त्वहं मर्वानहन्मि शत्रूनसमागतान्। अथ निष्कन्य गजेन्द्र समूलानहन्मि भाग्न ||'.

Dhritarashtra's is not an unwise person, *Vyasa* having guided him in ethical and moral principles and *Narada* and *Sanjaya* having informed him of the *divine* status of *Arjuna* and *Krishna*. Yet we find *Vyasa* bringing how even persons exposed to spiritual truths often display dubious and diabolical nature in primordial world. Therefore though he refers *Druapadi* as 'वधूनां हि विशिष्टा मे त्वं धर्मपरमा सती', describing *Yudhishthira* as अजातशत्रु and 'वेत्थ त्वं तात धर्माणां गतिं सूक्ष्मा युधिष्ठिर | विनीतोऽसि महाप्राज्ञ वृद्धानां पर्युपासिता ||' he is not hesitate to request her to pardon *Duryodhana* keeping in mind his old parents 'दुर्योधनस्य पारुष्यं तत्तात हृदि मा कृथाः | मातरं चैव गान्धारीं मां च त्वं गुणकाङ्क्षया ||', even justifying the game of dice, was the result for his desire to see friends engage in friendly banter - 'मित्राणि द्रष्टुकामेन पुत्राणां च बलाबलम्', not forgetting to praise *Yudhshthira's* righteousness, *Arjuna* courage, *Bhima's* valor, receptivity and devotion of *Nakula* and *Sahdeva* 'त्वयि धर्मो ऽर्जुने धैर्यं भीमसेने पराक्रमः | श्रद्धा च गुरुशुश्रुषा यमयोः पुरुषाग्रयो ||'. Finally he allows *Pandavas* to go back again to *Khandavaprastha* with *Drauapadi* 'अजातशत्रो भद्रं ते खाण्डवप्रस्थमाविश | भ्रातृभिस्तेऽस्तु सौभात्रं धर्मे ते धीयतां मनः ||'.

Chapter - IV

When *Dushasana* hears that *Dhritarashtra* has released *Pandavas* from bondage and given them their kingdom, he promptly reports this to *Duryodhana* that the immense wealth which they had won had been returned to *Pandavas* by their old father 'दुःखेनैतत् समानीतं स्थविरो नाशयत्यसौ | शत्रुसाद्गमयद्द्रव्यं तद्बुध्यध्वं महारथाः ||'. Knowing not how to respond to the new situation, they fall back on the alternative to humour their old father. *Duryodhana* goes to him and praises *Arjuna's* brave deeds and how much he himself is afraid of him. *Dhritarashtra* not realizing the new ploy counsels him not to cross their way through unfair ways, since they are sure to fail even as all their earlier attempts failed. Therefore, when one can defeat them it is wise to live with them in peaceful co-existence.

Duryodhana then reminds his father the advice which *Brihaspati* gave to *Indra* that one should defeat an enemy either through war or through other means. Therefore, seeing no possibility of living in friendship having humiliated them earlier or defeating them through armed struggle defeating them through the game of dice alone appears a reasonable course. Therefore he seeks his approval to play another game, with only condition that whoever looses in the game will go to forests for twelve years and live the thirteenth years *in cognito.* No other way appears reasonable since having been ill-treated and humiliated them, he expects *Pandavas* to take revenge on them.

Dhritarashtra who had justified their earlier invitation as good will sees this new opportunity as reasonable for his sons to fulfill his ambition making his sons undisputed contenders to the kingdom of the *Kurus*. He permits *Duryodhana* to invite *Yudhishthira* for another game. Seeing this change in Dhritarashtra's mind, *Bhishma, Drona, Bhurishravas, Yuyutsu, Vikarna* and others persuade him not to have the game of dice again pointing that it would surely bring much heart-burning and never any peace. *Dhritarashtra* is not inclined to listen to their sage advice and calls them back if they have not already reached *Khandavaprastha*. Hearing this news, *Gandhari* becomes concerned remembering *Vidura's* words that *Duryodhana* would be the cause of destruction of the family 'जाते दुर्योधने क्षत्ता महामतिरभाषत | नीयतां परलोकाय साध्वयं कुलपांसनः ||'. She warns her husband that if he does not restrain himself from this unwise step he himself will be held responsible. But the fond father, already blind in his vision becomes deaf to their pleadings, declaring that even if the family is ruined he is unable to refuse *Duryodhana* 'अथाब्रवीन्महाराजो गान्धारीं धर्मदर्शिनीम्| अन्तः कामं कुलस्यास्तु न शक्नोमि निवारितुम्|| यथेच्छन्ति तथैवास्तु प्रत्यागच्छन्तु पाण्डवाः | पुनर्द्यूतं च कुर्वन्तु मामकाः पाण्डवैः सह ||'.

As *Pandavas* were proceeding to *Indraprastha*, a messenger comes and conveys them the message. Brothers are shocked with disbelief but *Yudhishthira* sees nothing amiss, so fond was he for playing the game of dice. Taking refuge in righteousness he accepts the invitation- 'अक्षद्यूते समाह्वानं नियोगात्स्थविरस्य च | जानन्नपि क्षयकरं नातिक्रमितुमुत्सहे ||' not willing to concede his earlier misadventure, attributing it to दैव, the *divine* intent 'धातुर्नियोगाद्भूतानि प्राप्नुवन्ति शुभाशुभम्| न निवृत्तिस्तयोरस्ति देवितव्यं पुनर्यदि ||'. Desire becomes a strong and overwhelming motivation to justify his ill-founded decision. Time seems to be weaving its strange web in inscrutable way and renewed game begins perhaps as divinely ordained *Yudhishthira* falling prey 'जानन्नपि महाबुद्धिः पुनर्द्यूतमवर्तयत्| अप्यासन्नो विनाशः स्यात्कुरूणामिति चिन्तयन्||..एवं दैवबलाविष्टो धर्मराजो युधिष्ठिरः |.. वार्यमाणोऽपि मतिमान्न च राजा नियच्छति ||'.

As expected *Yudhishthira* again loses game after game and has to go in exile with his brothers for fourteen years - 'ततः पराजिताः पार्था वनवासाय दीक्षिताः | अजिनान्युत्तरीयाणि जगृहुश्च यथाक्रमम्||'. Inexorable *Time* seems to rule the lives of *Pandavas*, in spite of the sage advise from *Krishna* and other well-disposed elders, as amoral, agnostic world against them their righteousness disputed and tested on the bench mark of the unrighteous responses of *Kauravas*, often making one wonder whether in temporal life righteousness

pays, substantiating the dictum of *Charvaka, Duryodhana's* teacher, who said 'यावज्जीवेत्सुखं जीवेदृणं कृत्वा घृतं पीवेत्| भस्मीभूतस्य देहस्य पुनरागमनं कुतः ||'. While other brothers often appear struggling with their consciousness, *Yudhishthira* stands resolute in his belief in धर्म as the boat which alone will take him to safety.

When *Pandavas* prepare themselves to go on exile, *Dushasana* ridicules them saying that *Pandavas* having been razed to the ground, *Duryodhana* has now become absolute lord of the world, those who were priding themselves in shining armour earlier have now to wear animal hide to cover their shame. *Drupada* was surely unwise to give his only daughter to them, now that they have lost all their masculinity. Seeing him thus brag, *Bhima* berates him saying that it is not proper that he should speak having defeated them through trickery and not through valour. He will surely have his chest breached puffed up with arrogance by *Bhima.* Disregarding *Bhima's* reprimand, *Dushasana* dances around him shamelessly addressing him '*Bull, Bull*'. But seeing this indecent behaviour *Arjuna* comforts *Bhima* saying that he will face the consequences for this insult 'नैव वाचा व्यवसितं भीम विज्ञायते सताम्| इतश्चतुर्दशे वर्षे द्रष्टारो यद्भविष्यति ||'. *Duryodhana* too shows repeatedly his thigh asking *Draupadi* to sit thereon. *Bhima* roars again that the earth will surely be drenched with *Duryodhana's* blood. *Arjuna* too declares that may Himalayas may shift their place, sun may loose its luminosity, moon loose its cool but he will surely kill *Karna* and his companions. 'चलेद्धि हिमवान्स्थानान्निष्प्रभः स्याद्दिवाकरः | शैत्यं सोमात्प्रणश्येन्मत्सत्यं विचलेद यदि || न प्रदास्यति चेद्राज्यमितो वर्षे चतुर्दशे | दुर्योधनोऽभिसत्कृत्य सत्यमेतद्भविष्यति ||'.

Finally when they depart on the exile with *Draupadi* leaving *Kunti* to the paternal care of *Vidura* 'आर्या पृथा राजपुत्री नारण्यं गन्तुमर्हति | सुकुमारी च वृद्धा च नित्यं चैव सुखोचिता ||'. People mourn their departure saying he whom great armies followed is now followed only by *Draupadi* and his four brothers - 'यं यान्तमनुयाति स्म चतुरङ्गबलं महत्| तमेवं कृष्णया सार्धमनुयान्ति स्म पाण्डवाः || चत्वारो भ्रातरश्चैव पुत्राश्च विशाम्पतीम्||'. As they ready themselves to depart, *Vidura* counsels them that one who is defeated through unrighteousness should ever grieve over those events. *Pandavas* are righteous, courageous, brave, industrious and enterprising. They should seek to be initiated by *Indra* for success, *Yama* for subduing anger, *Kubera* for charity, *Varuna* for restraint. They should gain *self* being good to others, life from water, compassion from earth, brilliance from Sun, strength from wind, and wealth from all quarters. He wishes them success in their enterprise, hoping to see them again when they return 'ऐन्द्रे जयं धृतमना याम्ये कोपविधारणं || तथा विसर्गे कौबेरे वारुणे चैव संयमे | आत्मप्रदानं सौम्यत्वदभ्यश्चैवोपजीवनम्|| भूमेः क्षमा च तेजश्च समग्र सूर्यमण्डलात्| वायोर्बलं प्राप्नुहि त्वं भूतेभ्यश्चात्मसम्पदम्||'.

Dhritarashtra realizes the dangers of dissention in the family, but being blind in body and to reality of life, he dreams of eventful reign by his sons. When he desired to know from *Vidura* how *Pandavas* have taken the events, he tells him that *Yudhishthira* and his brothers were seen hiding their faces not only to conceal their anger but also their distress from the populace. *Draupadi* seems to be the only one who was furious at her being humiliated, vowing revenge against all those who have sinned against her. She declared that she will enter *Hastinapura* only when they with their sons lay dead with their dependents lamenting 'यत्कृतेऽहमिदं प्राप्ता तेषां वर्षे चतुर्दशे | हतपत्यो हतसुता हतबन्धुजनप्रियाः || बहुशोणितदिग्धाङ्ग्यो मुक्तकेश्यो रजस्वलाः | एवं कृतोदका भार्याः प्रवेक्ष्यन्ति गजस्वयम्||'. Their departure did not portend well for *Kurus,* the capital struck with lightning, even when there were no clouds, earth trembling, Sun appearing eclipsed and on the left a shining meteor streaking across the town. Vultures, crows, beasts began dropping flesh in the temples, trees and tanks displaying evil portends for the country 'एवं तेषु नरग्र्येषु निर्यत्सु गजसाह्वयात्| अनभ्रे विद्युतश्चासन्भूमिश्च समकम्पत || राहुरग्रसदादित्यमपर्वणि विशाम्पते उल्का चाप्यसव्येन पुरं कृत्वा व्यशीर्यत ||.. एवमेते महोत्पाताः प्रादुरासन्दुरासदाः | भरतानामभवाय राजन्दुर्मन्त्रिते तव ||'. Even as these events made people apprehensive, *Narada*, the celestial minstrel enters warning that on expiry of the fourteen years the *Kuru family* will be destroyed due to *Duryodhana'a* transgression of धर्म and *Bhima* and *Arjuna* performing brave deeds - 'इतश्चतुर्दशे वर्षे विनङ्क्ष्यन्तीह कौरवाः | दुर्योधनापराधेन भीमार्जुन बलेन च ||'.

Hearing all these unpleasant and unwelcome signs, *Dhritarashtra* goes in depression, for which *Sanjaya* tells him that he should not hold any one responsible but himself for not listening to wise ones. Those whom gods desire to destroy, their minds are made obscure to perform unrighteous actions

'नवेदं स्वकृतं राजन् महद्वैरमुपस्थितम्| विनाशो येन लोकस्य सानुबन्धो भविष्यति || यस्मै देवाः प्रयच्छन्ति पुरुषाय पराभवम्| बुद्धिं तस्यापकर्षन्ति सोऽवाचीनानि पश्यति || बुद्धौ कलुषभूतायां विनाशे समुपस्थिते | अनयो नयसंकाशो हृदयान्नापसर्पति || अनर्थाश्चार्थरूपेण अर्थाश्चानर्थरूपिणः | उत्तिष्ठन्ति विनाशाय नूनं तच्चास्य रोचते ||'. काल *Time* not appearing to punish but vitiate the mind of the people 'न कालो दण्डमुद्यम्य शिरः कृन्तति कस्यचित्| कालस्य बलमेतावद् विपरीतार्थदर्शनम्||'. *Sanjaya* recommends even at this stage peace rather than hatred with *Pandavas*, because *Pandavas* are more powerful than *Kauravas*. *Vidura* advises him to restrain *Duryodhana* from his wickedness and *Dushasana* to apologize in the open assembly for the humiliation inflicted by him on *Draupadi* and finally to install *Yudhishthira* on his throne.

Still obscured and attached to his evil son, *Dhritarashtra* protest that they all speak in favour of *Pandavas* becoming un-favourable to his sons. He accuses *Vidura* that he has come to plead for *Pandavas* and not as his well wisher. How can he abandon his own sons for those of *Pandu*? Even though they too are like his own sons but *Duryodhana* is born his own self. Who can then agree to abandon one's own sons for the sake of sons of others? *Dhritarashtra* angrily says that he does not respect his advice any more, since he appears to be not honest in his advises. Therefore he may leave him wherever he desires, since he has no use of him - 'एतद्वाक्यं विदुर यत्त्वं सभायामिह प्राह पाण्डवानप्राप्य मा च | हितं तेषामहितं मामकानामेतत्सर्वं मम नावैति चेतः || इदं त्विदानीं गत एव निश्चितं तेषामर्थे पाण्डवानां यदात्थ | तेनाद्य मन्ये नासि हितो ममेति कथं हि पुत्रं पाण्डवार्थे त्यजेयम्|| असंशयं तेऽपि ममैव पुत्रा दुर्योधनस्तु मम देहात्प्रसूतः | स्वं वै देहं परहेतोस्त्यजेति को नु ब्रूयात्समतामन्ववेक्ष्य || न मा जिह्मं विदुर सर्वं ब्रवीषि मानं च तेऽहमधिकं धारयामि | यथेच्छकं गच्छ वा तिष्ठ वा त्वं सुसान्त्व्यमानाप्यसती स्त्री जहाति ||'. Hurt and disappointed *Vidura* goes to the forests to be with *Pandavas*, telling them that just as an evil woman could not be brought on an exemplary path, *Dhritarashtra* is not be possible to be brought on principled path, 'न श्रेयसे नीयतेऽमन्दबुद्धिः स्त्री श्रोत्रियस्येव गृहे प्रदुष्टा |'.

Dhritarashtra has been living too long under the shadow of *Vidura* that he feels his absence and soon prevails him to come back. On seeing him back he tells him that it is his good fortune that he has not forgotten him and come back 'दिष्ट्या प्राप्तोऽसि धर्मज्ञ दिष्ट्या स्मरसि अनघ ||'. *Duryodhana* seeing this brotherly feelings between them, angrily bursts out why should the *Pandavas* be called back, so that he may commit suicide - 'अथ पश्यामहं पार्थान्प्राप्तानिह कथंचन | पुनः शोषं गमिष्यामि निरसुर्निरवग्रहः || विषमुद्बन्धनं चैव शस्त्रमग्निप्रवेशनम्| करिष्ये न हि तान्‌ऋद्धान्पुनर्द्रष्टुमिहोत्सहे ||'. But *Shakuni* and others assure him that *Pandavas* would never ever return, *Karna* telling him that if they return they can defeat them again in the game of dice. *Duryodhana* disapproves saying they all are speaking to instill confidence in him, instead they should think of destroying *Pandavas* when they are in the forest.

Vyasa comes to know their plan and goes to *Dhritarashtra* to tell him that great disaster would fall on them if they are not stopped in their action. *Dhritarashtra* agrees saying that others too have advised like wise but he is incapable to counsel and control his wayward son. He requests *Vyasa* and sage *Maitreya* to counsel *Duryodhana*. When *Maitreya* broaches the subject with *Duryodhana*, he sits with extreme reluctance and impatience not listening but merely scratching the floor with his toe nail - 'न किंचिदुक्त्वा दुर्मेधास्तस्थौ किंचिदवाङ्मुखः | नमशुश्रूषमाणा तु विलिखन्‌ वसुधाम्||'. Seeing his disrespectful attitude, the sage becomes angry and tells him that he will surely be killed by *Bhima* hearing which *Dhritarashtra* implores him to bless him that it will not be so. Bu feeling slighted the sage refuses to speak any further and departs from their presence.

Pandavas travel along and reach the sacred pilgrim centre at *Kurukshetra*. After taking bath they proceed further to the west, reach *Kamayakavana* in the desert where the *Sarasvati* once flowed. *Bhojas, Vrishnis* and *Andhakas* led by *Krishna* visit them there and assure that time has come for the earth to be seeped with the blood of *Duryodhana*, *Karna*, *Shakuni* and *Dushasana* 'दुर्योधनस्य कर्णस्य शकुनेश्च दुरात्मनः | दुःशासनचतुर्थानां भूमिः पास्यति शोणितम्||'almost echoing the words which *Bhima* had vowed earlier. Extremely pleased, *Pandavas* thank them; eulogizing *Krishna*. *Arjuna* informs them that *Vyasa* had earlier informed them that he is *Vishnu*, who as the ancient seer *Narayana* had performed austerities and penances for hundreds and thousands of years for the welfare of the worlds- 'स त्वं नारायणो भूत्वा हरिरासीः परंतप |.. त्वं विष्णुरिति विख्यात इन्द्रादवरजो विभुः ||..युगान्ते सर्वभूतानि संक्षिप्य मधुसूदन | आत्मन्येवात्मसात्कृत्वा जगदासीः परंतप || युगादौ तव वार्ष्णेय नाभिपद्मादजायत

|..इत्थं नावपि देवर्षी त्वच्छरीरसमुद्भवौ || त्वन्नियोगकरावेतावित्ति मे नारदोऽब्रवीत्| तथा नारायण पुरा कतुभिर्भूरिदक्षिणैः ||'. *Krishna* in return reminds *Arjuna* that he is no one other than नर and both belonging to each other 'ममैव त्वं तवैवाहं ये मदीयास्तवैव ते | यस्त्वा द्वेष्टि स मां द्वेष्टि यस्त्वामनु स मामनु || नरस्त्वमसि दुर्धर्ष हरिर्नारायणो ह्यहम्| काले लोकमिमं प्राप्तौ नरनारायणवृषी || अनन्यः पार्थ मत्तस्त्वं त्वत्तश्चाहं तथैव च | नावयोरन्तरं शक्यं वेदितुं भरतर्षभ ||'.

Draupadi praises him as the *Primal Person,* manifesting as the creation, establishing immortality of the gods and mortality of the creatures 'विष्णुरस्त्वमसि दुर्धर्ष त्वं यज्ञो मधुसूदन | दाप्टा त्वमसि यष्टव्यो ...|| ऋषयस्त्वां क्षमामाहुः सत्यं च पुरुषोत्तम | सत्याद्यज्ञोऽसि सम्भूत. कश्यपस्त्वां यथाब्रवीत्||'. Therefore, she remonstrates how any one can humiliate in open assembly one who is wife to *Pandavas*, friend to *Krishna* and sister to *Drishtadhyumna* 'कथं नु भार्या पार्थानां तव कृष्ण सखी विभो | धृष्टद्युम्नस्य भगिनी सभां कृष्येत मादृश || तस्मिन्कृष्ण भीष्मस्य धृतराष्ट्रस्य चोभयोः | स्नुषा भवामि धर्मेण साहं दासीकृता बलात् ||'. Finding fault with *Pandavas* she says they deserve to be blamed for having kept quiet when evil-minded sons of *Dhritarashta* was laughing - 'दृष्ट्वा मां धार्तराष्ट्रा प्राहसन्पापचेतसः' wanting to enjoy her as slave when *Panadavas, Panchala* and *Vrishnis* were alive - 'दासीभावेन मां भोक्तुमीषुस्ते मधुसूदन | जीवत्सु पाण्डुपुत्रेषु पाञ्चालेषु च वृष्णिषु ||'. She blurts out 'धिग्बलं भीमसेनस्य धिक्पार्थस्य च गाण्डीवम्| यौ मां विप्रकृतां क्षुद्रैर्मर्षयेतां जनार्दन || . . नत्यिमं शरणं प्राप्तं न त्यजन्ति कदाचन | ते मां शरणमापन्नां नान्वपद्यन्त पाण्डवाः ||..अधर्मेण हृत राज्य सर्वे दासाः कृतास्तथा | सभायां परिकृष्टाहमेकवस्त्रा रजस्वला ||..धिग्बलं भीमसेनस्य धिक्पार्थस्य पौरुषम्| यत्र दुर्योधनः कृष्ण मुहूर्तमपि जीवति ||..नैव मे पतयः सन्ति न पुत्रा न च बान्धवाः | न भ्रातारो न च पिता नैव त्वं मधुसूदन || ये मां विप्रकृतां क्षुद्रैरुपेक्षध्वं विशोकवत्| न च मे शाम्यते दुःखं कर्णो यत् प्राहसत्तदा || चतुर्भिः कारणैः कृष्ण त्वया रक्षयास्मि नित्यशः | सम्बन्धाद्गौरवात्सख्यात्प्रभुत्वेनैव केशव ||'. She considers only *Krishna* as responsible for protecting her because of her being born from sacrificial fire-place and being his companion 'चतुर्भिः कारणैः कृष्ण त्वया रक्ष्यास्मि नित्यशः | सम्बन्धाद्गौरवात्सख्यात्प्रभुत्वेनैव केशव ||'.

Krishna consoles her saying that he was not any where near about then such situation would not have arisen. He would have come to there, even if he had not been invited and would have saved the game being played 'नेदं कृच्छ्रमनुप्राप्तो भवान्स्याद्वसुधाधिप | यद्यहं द्वारकायां स्यां राजन् संनिहितः पुरा || आगच्छेयमहं द्यूतमनाहूतोऽपि कौरवैः | अम्बिकेयेन दुर्धर्ष राज्ञा दुर्योधनेन च | वारयेयमहं द्यूतं बहून्दोषान्प्रदर्शयन्||'. If they had not heard his advise then he would have forcibly stopped the game being played, he was not in *Anartadesha* during those days therefore they had to face the troubles. The moment he came back to *Dvaraka* he came to know the events and promptly came to them 'न चेत्स मम राजेन्द्र गृह्णीयान्मधुरं वचः | पथ्यं च भरतश्रेष्ठ निगृह्णीयां बलेन तम्|| असांनिध्यं तु कौरव्य ममानर्तेष्वभूत तदा | येनेदं व्यसनं प्राप्ता भवन्तो द्यूतकारितम्|| सोऽहमेत्य कुरुश्रेष्ठ द्वारका पाण्डुनन्दन | अश्रौषं त्वां व्यसनिनं युयुधानाद् यथातथम्|| श्रुत्वैव चाहं राजेन्द्रं परमोद्विग्न मानसः | तूर्ण मभ्यागतोऽस्मि त्वां द्रष्टुकामो विशाम्पते ||'.

Then assuring that wives of the *Kauarvas* too will one day end in agony with their destruction 'रोदिष्यन्ति स्त्रियो ह्येवं येषा क्रुद्धासि भाविनि | बीभत्सुशरसंछन्नाञ्शोणितौघपरिप्लुतान्|| .. सत्यं ते प्रतिजानामि राज्ञां राज्ञी भविष्यसि | पतेद्द्यौर्हिमवाञ्शीर्येत्पृथिवी शकलीभवेत्|| शुष्येत् तोयनिधिः कृष्णे न मे मोघं वचो भवेत्|'. *Krishna's* statement may appear unjust as far as the innocent wives are concerned but this declaration should be seen in the larger perspective from the principle stated in *Bhaguvad Gita* where *Krishna* indicates that primarily he is the *divine essence* established in gross *Krishna-form*, 'अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सन्| प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय सम्भवाम्यात्ममायया ||' and suggests that his *Krishna-form* like any other *gross forms* too is by the same reasoning an extension of the principle established when he said 'मयैवैते निहताः पूर्वमेव निमित्तमात्रं भव सव्यसाचिन्||' the *divine essence* having made even the *Krishna-form* the instrument for fulfilling the *divine intent* and *purpose.* Therefore one should be sensitively receptive and consciously distinguish the various situations and the contexts in *Krishna's* life when speaks words as a temporal person but which should be seen on a larger perspective as the actions of the divine *essence* concealed within that gross *Krishna-form.* Therefore the words which *Krishna* used the prophetic words that the *Kaurava* women also will suffer one day agony with the destruction of their destruction it is not from *Krishnaform* but retribution ordained by the *divine essence* the *Krishna-Consciousness,* when even seemingly innocent persons are destined to suffer when unrighteous persons are destroyed, as in wars as well as in earthquakes, tempests and typhoons which occur as irrevocable and irreversible consequence of causes which superficially are not known. *Arjuna* and *Drishtadhyumna* endorse what *Krishna* - 'अहं द्रोणं हनिष्यामि शिखण्डी तु पितामहान्| दुर्योधनं भीमसेनः कर्णं हन्ता धनञ्जयः ||

रामकृष्णौ व्यपाश्रित्य अजेयाः स्म रणे ग्वमः | अपि वृत्रहणा युद्धे किं पुनर्धुनरापद्रजे ||'.

Thereafter, *Krishna* taking *Yudhishthira's* leave to depart to *Dvaraka* and *Drishtadhyumna* taking *Draupadi's* children with him to *Panchala Pandavas* depart to *Dvaitavana* to spend the twelve years of exile. In *Dvaitavana* they meet seer *Markandeya* seeing whom with a pleasing countenance, *Yudhishthira* asks him how is it that he has a satisfied look on his face when other sages appear sad seeing them suffering. The sage replies that he is neither happy not unhappy seeing them 'न तात हृष्यामि न च स्मयामि प्रहर्षजो मां भजते न दर्पः || तवापद त्वद्य समीक्षय रामं सत्यव्रतं दाशरथिं स्मरामि ||' but he smiled recalling *Dasharathi Rama's* similar exile, 'संस्मृत्य रामं मनसा महात्मा तपस्वीमध्येस्मयतर्मिनीजाः'. Then he reminds him that ordainor has ordained every action for creatures, therefore one should perform them with righteousness whatever comes to their lot - 'सर्वाणि भूतानि नरेन्द्र पश्य तथा यथावद्विहितं विधाता | स्वयोनितः कर्म सदा चरन्ति नेशो बलवर्योनि धर्मधर्मम्|| सत्येन धर्मेण यथार्हवृत्त्या ह्रिया तथा सर्वभूतान्यतील्य | यशश्च तेजश्च तवापि दीप्तं विभावसोर्भास्करस्येव पार्थ ||. Therefore complete the period of exile and then win your kingdom from the *Kauravas* 'यथाप्रतिज्ञं च महानुभाव कृच्छ्रं वनं वासमिम निरूप्य | ततः श्रिय तेजसा तेन दीप्तामादास्यसे पार्थिव कौरवेभ्यः ||'. *Baka* son of *Dalbha muni* assures them that if wisdom of the *Brahmins* comes to be united with the valor of the *Kshatriya* then that combination would be like fire with wind and those who do not combine these two do not last long 'ब्रह्म क्षत्रेण संसृष्टं क्षत्रं च ब्रह्मणा सह | उदीर्णदहनः शत्रून्वनानीवाग्निमारुतौ ||..ब्राह्मणेष्विह मेधावी बुद्धिपर्येषणं चरेत् अलब्धस्य च लाभाय लब्धस्य परिवृद्धये ||'.

Though they spend fourteen years of their exile in silent fortitude and austere penance. *Draupadi* once said to *Yudhishthira* that even though *Duryodhana* had no regrets sending them all to the forests, she can not help remembering their own good days in *Indraprastha* and winning the worlds. How is it then seeing her and his brothers unhappy and suffering, how can he remain silent and not rebel with anger in his heart 'नूनं च तव वै नास्ति मन्युर्भरतसत्तम | यत्ते भ्रातृंश्च मां चैव दृष्ट्वा न व्यथते मनः ||'. There is no *Kshatriya* who does not rebel, the word *Kshatriya* itself suggesting one who rebels in anger. Therefore, his behaviour appears to her as strange that when as *Kshatriya* he should be seething with anger for the injustice being done to them she see absence of any anger. One who is not angry when injustice is being perpetrated is called coward. It does not proper that he should be conciliatory to the enemies in such circumstances 'न निर्मन्युः क्षत्रियोऽस्ति लोके निर्वचनं स्मृतम | तदद्य त्वयि पश्यामि क्षत्रिये विपरीतवत्|| यो न दर्शयते तेजः क्षत्रियः काल आगते | सर्वभूतानि तं पार्थ सदा परिभवन्त्युत || तत्त्वया न क्षमा कार्या न परानि कथंचन | तेजसैव हि ते शक्या निहन्तुं नात्र संशयः ||'.

Yudhishthira is not inclined to accept this view saying that the times are certainly difficult for them unimaginable sufferings having befallen on them- 'कालोऽयं दारुणः प्राप्तो भरतानामभूतये | निश्चितं मे सदैवैतत्पुरस्तादपि भाविनि ||'. *Duryodhana* has never being kind and compassionate therefore could never understand what forgiveness is and therefoe does not deserve one. But since forgiveness alone is his own refuge, he needs to forgive - 'सुयोधनो नार्हतीति क्षमामेवं न विन्दति | अर्हस्तस्याहमित्येव तस्मान्मां विन्दते क्षमा ||'. Therefore in all circumstances he will adopt forgiving nature. Though there is no doubt that enemies can be defeated by force and aggression but that path does not appeal to him. Therefore though what she spoke would appeal any one, it appears as spoken by unorthodox one. He never performs his actions, not even righteous ones, expecting fruits but being compassionate, observing actions performed of noble ones, with mind attuned to perform actions being charitable as the ordained action. For one who performs righteous actions without expecting fruits, such one alone reaps the true fruits of righteousness. Just because fruits are not immediately visible, one should have no doubts about righteousness or the *divine intent*. The fruits of actions are sure to come, that is the assurance of धर्म. Therefore, considering everything as desirable and giving up all materialist and unorthodox thoughts will remove all her doubts - 'वल्गु चित्रपदं श्लक्ष्णं याज्ञसेनि त्वया वचः | उक्तं तच्छ्रुतमस्माभिर्नास्तिक्यं तु प्रभाषसे || नाहं कर्मफलान्वेषी राजपुत्रि चराम्युत | ददामि देयमित्येव यजे यष्टव्यमित्युत || धर्मं चरामि सुश्रोणि न धर्मफलकारणात् आगमाननतिक्रम्य सतां वृत्तमवेक्ष्य च || धर्म एव मनः कृष्णे स्वभावाच्चैव मे धृतम | धर्मवाणिज्यको हीनो जघन्यो धर्मवादिनाम् || न धर्मफलमाप्नोति यो धर्मं दोग्धुमिच्छति | यश्चैनं शङ्कते कृत्वा नास्तिक्यात्पापचेतनः ||..स नायमफलो धर्मो नाधर्मोऽफलवानपि | दृश्यन्तेऽपि हि विद्यानां फलानि तपसां तथा ||..न फलादर्शनाद्धर्मः शङ्कितव्यो न देवताः | यष्टव्यं च प्रयत्नेन दातव्यं चानसूयता ||'.

Draupadi is a determined lady with firn resolve not being convinced maintains that while she

has not doubts about *divine intent and purpose*, he should know that she is asking all these questions due her sufferings. She will not rest contented but will continue to ask therefore reply her queries with pleasingly. With the loss of the kingdom, great calamity has fallen on the family and if he takes in mind they will definitely be successful avoiding the sufferings and when it is accomplished it will bring great fame for all 'नावमन्ये न गर्हे च धर्मं पार्थ कथंचन |.. आर्ताह पलपामीदमिति मां विद्धि भारत | भूयश्च विलपयिष्यामि सुमनास्त्वं निबोध मे ||..एकान्तेन ह्यानर्थो ऽय वर्तते ऽस्मासु साम्प्रतम्| स तु निःसंशयं न स्यात् त्वयि कर्मण्यवस्थिते || अथवा सिद्धिरेव स्यादभिमानं तदेव ते |'.

Then like taking coal to Newcastle, *Bhima* too speaks extensively about धर्म to *Yudhishthira* telling him that for a *Kshatriya* attaining kingdom through actions performed according to धर्म and scriptures is most proper. For one faulting in righteousness, enterprise and desires and living in forest what purpose can be served? He is aware that *Yudhishthira* is well-respected as man of righteousness and respecting the same, all others have now fallen in great trouble. Only weak one spends his life in forests, not the powerful one. Neither *Krishna* nor *Bhima* nor any other brother appreciates his repeating धर्म धर्म every time. It is only hoped that this renunciation is not due to old age and impotency. Follow धर्म and with the help of *Arjuna* and himself win the kingdom again, because by following धर्म alone neither any king had won kingdom nor any wealth - 'राज्यस्य पदवीं धर्म्यां व्रज सत्पुरुषोचितम्| धर्मकामार्थहीनानां किं नो वस्तुं तपोवने ||..भवतः प्रियमित्येव महद्व्यसनमीदृशम्|| धर्मकामं प्रतीतस्य प्रतिपन्नाः स्म भारत ||..दुर्बलाचरितं राजन् न बलस्थैर्निषेवितम्|| या न कृष्णो न बीभत्सुर्नाभिमन्युर्न सृंजयाः | न चाहमभिनन्दामि न च माद्रीसुतावुभौ || भवान्धर्मो धर्म इति सततं व्रतकर्शितः | कच्चिद्राजन्न निर्वेदादापन्नः क्लीबजीविकम्|| स्वधर्मं प्रतिपद्यस्व जहि शत्रून्समागतान्| धार्तराष्ट्रवनं पार्थ मया पार्थेन नाशय ||..न हि केवलधर्मात्मा पृथिवीं जातु कश्चन | पार्थिवो व्यजयद्राजन्न भूतिं न पुनः श्रियम्||.

Yudhishthira becomes subdued with these strong exhortation protests that his words are creating extreme pain to his heart but he does not hold him responsible because he himself is the cause off all their sufferings, conceding further that he agreed to play the game second time thinking that he would possibly regain the kingdom and wealth lost, without realizing *Shakuni's* dishonest nature - 'असंशयं भारत सत्यमेतद्यन्मां तुदन् वाक्यशल्यैः क्षिणोषि | न त्वां विगर्हे प्रतिकूलमेतं ममानयाद्धि व्यसनं व आगात्|| अहं ह्यक्षानन्वपद्यं जिहीर्षन्राज्यं सराष्ट्रं धार्तराष्ट्रस्य पुत्रात्| तन्मां शठः कितवः प्रत्यदेवीत्सुयोधनार्थं सुबलस्य पुत्रः ||'. But he considers धर्म to be superior to life, immortality, kingdom and sons, success and wealth not standing comparison even by sixteenth part 'मम प्रतिज्ञां च निबोध सत्यां वृणे धर्मममृताज्जीविताच्च | राज्यं च पुत्राश्च यशो धनं च सर्वं न सत्यस्य कलामुपैति ||'.

When *Bhima* fails in his attempt to persuade *Yudhishthira*, they assure him that they are capable of defeating *Kauravas*, *Srinjayas* being ready to do anything that would please him. Therefore, he should fight the enemy because there is nothing greater than war for a *Kshatriya*. *Yudhishthira* then exhaling a long breath counsels him that while what he says is true he should also know what he has heard from wise persons. *Bhima* not to be hasty because all evil actions however courageously accomplished are bound to fail, even as well thought-out actions are bound to succeed 'महापापानि कर्माणि यानि केवलसाहसात्| आरभ्यन्ते भीमसेन व्यथन्ते तानि भारत || सुमन्त्रिते सुविक्रान्ते सुकृते सुविचारिते | सिध्यन्त्यर्था महाबाहो दैवं चात्र प्रदक्षिणम्||'. He cautions *Bhima* not to underestimate *Kauarava's* strength, since their army is strong and well equipped. The rulers whom *Pandavas* had defeated have all joined *Duryodhana*. Even though *Bhishma*, *Drona* and *Kripa* are equally fond of both the sides, since they depend on them for their livelihood, they will be obliged to support them in war - 'समाप्यपि भीष्मस्या वृत्तिरस्मासु तेषु च | द्रोणस्य च महाबाहो कृपस्य च महात्मनः || अवश्यं राजपिण्डस्तैर्निर्वेश्य इति मे मतिः | तस्मात्त्यक्ष्यन्ति सगामे प्राणानपि सुदुस्त्यजनान्||'. Unless they are defeated first, *Duryodhana* cannot be killed. Hearing these words, *Bhima* becomes sad and keeps silent grumbling however that every one is pleased with his advice except himself and *Draupadi* - 'सर्वे ते प्रियमिच्छन्ति बान्धवाः सह सृञ्जयैः | अहमेकश्च सतप्तो याता च प्रतिविन्ध्यतः ||'. Here these words *Bhima* became exceedingly angry and depressed in mind.

At that moment *Vyasa* becoming concerned with their agitated minds informs them that he has understood mentally their problems. Therefore, he proposes to solve the same keeping in mind the divine skill. The time has come when *Arjuna* will defeat *Duryodhana* making you the ruler of the land. He will initiate him a *mantra* known as *Murtimati* for which becoming properly be receptive, success will come to *Arjuna*. Let him approach *Indra*, *Rudra*, *Varuna*, *Kuber* and *Yama* through penance and

austerity. He verily is the celebrated seer *Nara*, friend and companion of *Narayana* and will receive many weapons from them that will make him invincible 'गृहाणेमां मया प्रोक्तां सिद्धिं मूर्तिमतीमिव | विद्यां प्रतिस्मृतिं नाम प्रपन्नाय ब्रवीमि ते || यामवाप्य महाबाहुरर्जुनः साधयिष्यति | अस्त्रहेतोर्महेन्द्रं च रुद्रं चैवाभिगच्छतु || वरुणं च कुबेरं च धर्मराजं च पाण्डव | शक्तो ह्येष सुरान्द्रष्टुं तपसा विक्रमेण च || ऋषिरेष महातेजा नारायण सहायवान् | पुराणः शाश्वतो देवस्त्वजेयो जिष्णुरच्युतः || अस्त्राणीन्द्राच्च रुद्राच्च लोकपालेभ्य एव च | समादाय महाबाहुर्महत्कर्म करिष्यति ||'.

Before he leaves them, he tells them to shift their dwelling from the present forest to some other, saying that it is not advisable to stay in one place for long, since their presence may cause obstacles to the sages in their austerities. Accordingly with the blessing of the gods presiding over the quarters and the sages for good fortune, success, wealth etc and safe passage they shift themselves to *Kamyakavana* adjacent to river *Sarasvati*. Then as advised by *Vyasa*, *Arjuna* approaches *Indra* and others for getting the divine weapons. *Draupadi* then addresses that he may attain all those things which his mother *Kunti* had prayed for him, his brothers in the intervening period will spend recalling all his earlier brave deeds. They may not enjoy any pleasures or any food in his absence, their all future happiness being entirely dependent on him. Therefore fare well let your journey be rewarding. Fight not with more powerful, this is her earnest request. Let my obeisance be to the ordainer and controller, so that they may be favourably inclined towards him; let courage, resplendence, wisdom, foresight, determination, *Uma, Lakshmi* and *Sarasvati* be favourably inclined towards him; let the heavenly and worldly gods, benevolent and malevolent gods be favourably inclined towards him on his journey 'यत्त्व कुन्ती महाबाहो जातेऽयैच्छद्धनंजय || तत्तेऽस्तु सर्वं कौन्तेय यथा च स्वयमिच्छसि |..नूनं ते भ्रातरः सर्वे त्वत्कथाभिः प्रजागरे | रंस्यन्ते वीर कर्माणि कथयन्तः पुनः पुनः | नैव नः पार्थ भोगेषु न धने नोत जीविते || तुष्टिर्बुद्धिर्भवित्री वा त्वयि दीर्घप्रवासिनि | त्वयि नः पार्थ सर्वेषां सुखदुःखे समाहिते || जीवितं मरणं चैव राज्यमैश्वर्यमेव च | आपृष्टो मेऽसि कौन्तेय स्वस्ति प्राप्नुहि भारत ||..नमो धात्रे विधात्रे च स्वस्ति गच्छ ह्यनामयम् ह्री. श्री. कीर्तिर्द्युति. पुष्टिरुमा लक्ष्मीः सरस्वती | इमा वै तव पान्थस्य पालयन्तु धनंजय ||..प्रपद्येऽहं वसून्रुद्रानादित्यान्समरुद्गणान् || विश्वेदेवांस्तथा साध्याञ्छान्त्यर्थं भरतर्षभ | स्वस्ति तेऽस्त्वान्तरिक्षेभ्यः पार्थिवेभ्यश्च भारत || दिव्येभ्यश्चैव भूतेभ्यो ये चान्ये परिपन्थिनः |'.

Embarking on his journey, *Arjuna* reaches a lonely place beyond the *Himalayas*, where he sees a sage luminous in splendor, fully equipped in arms and armaments reclining on a tree inquiring him the purpose of his journey. *Arjuna* tells him that he is going to *Indra* for divine weapons, for becoming victorious over his enemies and deliverance of his brothers now living in forests. The luminous sage being *Indra* in disguise advises him that he cannot give them to him but from *Shiva* through penance. *Arjuna* performs penance and intense austerities as no one had performed earlier. Pleased with him *Shiva* lauds in affectionate disposition saying that he exceedingly happy with performance of his actions, courage and valor, there being no other warrior like him. Then addressing him as the ancient seer, he gives him exceptional divine sight to see him 'भो भो. फाल्गुन तुष्टोऽस्मि कर्मणाप्रतिमेन ते | शौर्येणानेन धृत्या च क्षत्रियो नास्ति ते समः || समं तेजश्च वीर्यं च ममाद्य तव चानघ | प्रीतस्तेऽहं महाबाहो पश्य मां भरतर्षभ || ददामि ते विशालाक्ष चक्षुः पूर्वऋषिर्भवान् | विजेष्यसि रणे शत्रूनपि सर्वान्दिवौकस ||'. *Arjuna* then requests him to grace with the divine weapon *Pashupatastra* which is powerful and incomparable 'भगवन्ददासि चेन्मह्य कामं प्रीत्या वृषध्वज | कामये दिव्यमस्त्र तद घोरं पाशुपतं प्रभो | यत्तद्ब्रह्मशिरो नाम रौद्रं भीमपराक्रमम् युगान्ते दारुणे प्राप्ते कृत्स्नं संहरते जगत्||'. Then being commended by the great god that he is eligible to possess 'समर्थो धारणे मोक्षे संहारे चासि पाण्डव |', *Arjuna* receives *Pashupatastra* from which no one in the three worlds could ever remain unharmed, and which can destroy with mere thought, sight, speech and using the bow - 'अवध्यो नाम नास्त्यत्र त्रैलोक्ये सचराचरे | मनसा चक्षुषा वाचा धनुषा च निपातयेत्||'. When *Arjuna* became completely attuned to receive the divine weapon from *Shiva* the earth with its mountains, forests, oceans towns and villages began trembling, heavens rejoicing with sound of thousands of conches, drums and tabors with wind lashing, *Pashupatastra* descended with tremendous force flashing like lightening and stood behind *Arjuna*, in the very presence of gods and *asuras* and all the inauspicious marks in him having been eliminated 'ततश्चचाल पृथिवी सपर्वतवनद्रुमा | ससागरवनोद्देशा सग्रामनगराकरा || शङ्खदुन्दुभिघोषाश्च भेरीणां च सहस्रशः | तस्मिन्मुहूर्ते सम्प्राप्ते निर्घातश्च महानभूत्|| अथास्त्र जाज्वल्यद्घोरं पाण्डवस्यामितौजसः | मूर्तिमद्वै स्थितं पार्श्वे ददृशुर्देवदानवा ||'. Then as commanded by *Shiva*, *Arjuna* after offering obeisance to the great god goes with the weapon to *Indra* in heaven 'स्वर्गं गच्छेत्यनुज्ञातस्त्र्यम्बकेण तदार्जुनः | प्रणम्य

शिरसा राजन्पाञ्जलिर्देवमक्षन |'. There being pleased *Indra* welcomes him and arranges to grace him expertise not only in weapons but also in singing and dancing.

During the days when *Arjuna* was in heavenly worlds. *Indra* having known his reputation as chivalrous among women arranges to send *Urvashi* the celestial nymph to him but when she makes romantic overtures *Arjuna* does reciprocate saying that he has motherly feelings for her 'श्रृणु सत्यं वरारोहे यत्त्वां वक्ष्याम्यनिन्दिते | श्रृण्वन्तु मे दिशश्चैव विदिशाश्च सदेवताः || यथा कुन्ति च माद्री शची नैव ममनघे | तथा च वंशजननी त्व हि मेऽद्य गरीयसि || गच्छ मूर्ध्ना प्रपन्नोऽस्मि पादौ ने वरवर्णिनि | त्वं हि मे मातृवत्पूज्या रक्ष्योऽहं पुत्रवत्त्वया ||'. This makes her angry telling him that she had come to him at the behest of *Indra,* therefore, feeling rebuffed she curses him that he will spend rest of his life पण्डवत *like a eunuch* dancing in the company of women. 'नव पित्राभ्यनुज्ञाता स्वयं च गृहमागताम्| यस्मान्मा नाभिनन्देथाः कामबाणवशगताम्|| तस्मात्त्व नर्तनः पार्थ स्त्रीमध्ये मानवर्जितः | अपुमानिति विख्यातः पण्डवद्विचरिष्यसि ||'. The curse to live among women must surely have been worse curse than death to him. But when *Chitrasena Gandharva* reports this incident to *Indra*, he consoles *Arjuna* saying that the curse to live without manliness अपुस्त्वेन would be useful for him during the period of his exile and assured him that this condition would only be for one year during the last one year of their exile *in cognito* 'अज्ञातवासं वसन्व्यां भवद्भिर्भूतलेऽनघ | वर्षे त्रयोदशे वीर तत्र त्वं क्षपयिष्यसि || तेन नर्तनवेषेण अपुंस्त्वेन तथैव च | वर्षमेकं विहृत्याव ततः पुंस्त्वमवाप्स्यसि ||'.

The impression that he had become a eunuch was perhaps influenced by *Arjuna's* well-established reputation as amorous and chivalrous among women, having married many beautiful women. *Bhagavat Purana* narrates an incident that after the *Kuruskhetra* war was over and *Arjuna* returns from *Dvaraka* after a long lapse of time, *Yudhishthira* chides seeing him weak, whether he was keeping good heath, hoping that he did not share bed with unworthy women or with a woman unworthy for him - 'कच्चित्तेऽनामय तात भ्रष्टतेजा विभासि मे | अलब्धमानोऽवज्ञातः किं वा तात चिरोषितः || .. कच्चित्वं नागमोऽगम्यां गम्यां वासत्कृतां स्त्रीयम्|'.

The belief that he became a eunuch was, however, not correct. Even during the days when *Arjuna* impersonates as *Brihannala* in *Virata's* court, he was not a eunuch but only *behaved like one* dancing in the company of women. In *Virata Parva*, *Arjuna* clarifies he took advantage of *Urvashi's* curse to live *like a eunuch* though not eunuch dancing in the company of women. When the year comes to close he says that he would not be required to impersonate as such, 'भ्रातुर्नियोगाज्ज्येष्ठस्य सवत्सरमिदं व्रतम्| चरामि व्रतचर्यं च सत्यमेतद्ब्रवीमि ते || नास्मि क्लीवोमहावाहो परवान्धर्मसंयुतः | समाप्तव्रतमुत्तीर्णं विद्धि मां त्वं नृपात्मज ||'. *Arjuna's* statement finds further credence when he says to *Virata's* son prince *Bhuminjaya* that as enjoined by *Yudhsishthira*, he remained assuredly a celibate during the year fulfilling *Ursvashi's* curse. But he is not a eunuch being only enjopined by the curse. Therefore, having completed the year he is not more a eunuch havaing been released from the curse 'भ्रातुर्नियोगज्जेष्ठस्य संवत्सरमिदं व्रतम्| चरामि व्रतचर्यं च सत्यमेतद्ब्रवीमि ते || नास्मि क्लीवो महाभावो परवान्धर्मसंयुतः | समाप्तव्रतवृत्तीर्णं विद्धि मां त्वं नृपात्मज ||'.

Therefore, when a a proposal was made by *Virata* to accept *Uttara* his only daugher as his wife, *Arjuna* tells him that when she had already attained puberty she had stayed with him for one year to learn dancing. If he marries her then people will suspect her character. Since such suspicion should not arise in their minds he had always lived pure, with his senses and mind restrained and the renown of his daughter will remain well-established. There being no difference between daughter and daughter in law, he will accept her as a bride for his son *Abhimanyu*, who is also *Krishna's* nephew 'वयःस्थया तया राजन् सह संवत्सरोषितः | अभिशङ्का भवेत्स्थाने तव लोकस्य वा विभो || तस्मान्निमन्त्रयेऽहं ते दुहितां मनुजाधिप | शुद्धो जितेन्द्रियो दान्तस्तस्याः शुद्धिः कृता मया || स्नुषायां दुहितार्वापि पुत्रे चात्मनि वा पुनः | अत्र शङ्का न पश्यामि तेन शुद्धिर्भविष्यति || अभिशापादहं भीतो मिथ्यावादात्परंतप | स्नुषार्थमुत्तरां राजन्प्रतिगृह्णामि ते सुताम ||'. In later days, *Arjuna's* high sense of propriety and control over his senses came to be recommended for people to be delivered form their desire from sex gratification 'इदं यः श्रृणुयाद्वृत्तं नित्यं पाण्डुसुतस्य वै | न तस्य कामः कामेषु पापकामेषु प्रवर्तते ||'.

Yudhishthira comes to know from sages that *Arjuna* had engaged in performing many austerities to gain the powerful weapons. Listening to the description of the difficult penances *Yudhishthira* grieves when he will see *Arjuna* again, 'कदा द्रक्ष्यामि वै भीम पार्थमत्र तवानुजम्| मत्कृते हि कुरुश्रेष्ठस्तप्यते दुश्चर तपः

||', saying that his mind has become disentangled like the pearls sliding from the string or like the bird whose wings have cut - 'अक्षिप्तसूत्रा मणयश्छिन्नपक्षा इव द्विजाः | अप्रतिमनसः सर्वे बभूवुरथ पाण्डवाः ||'. *Draupadi* gives voice to her melancholy, 'योऽर्जुनेनार्जुनतुल्यो द्विबाहुर्बहुना | तमृते पाण्डवश्रेष्ठ वनं न प्रतिभाति मे |'. *Bhima* says 'तमृते पुरुषव्याघ्रं नष्टसूर्यमिवाम्बरम्|' and hearing his words *Nakaula* and *Sahadeva* burst out in tears 'सगुश्रकण्ठो नकुलः पाण्डुनन्दनः |' and 'न हि तस्मृते वीरं रमणीयमिदं वनम्|'. Therefore, to overcome the feeling of separation, seer *Narada* arrives among them and advises them to proceed on an extended visit to various pilgrim centres so that the pangs of separation may be minimized.

Deputed by *Indra* to *Kamyakavana* seer *Lomesha* informs *Yudhishthira, Arjuna's* accomplishments in the heavens, his attainment of weapons, music and dance 'नोत्कण्ठा फाल्गुने कार्या कृतास्त्रः शीघ्रमेष्यति || गृहीतास्त्रो गुडाकेशो महाबाहुर्महामनाः | नृत्यवादित्रगीतानां दिव्यानां पारमीयिवान्||'. Seer *Lomasha* tells them that when he had visited the heavens, he was surprised to see *Arjuna* sitting by the side of *Indra* and will soon join them, till then they should perform austerities and visit holy places 'आगमिष्यति ते भ्राता कृतास्त्रः क्षिप्रमर्जुनः | सुरकार्यं महत्कृत्वा यदाशक्यं दिवौकसैः तपसापि त्वमात्मानं योजय भ्रातृभिः सह | तपसो हि परं नास्ति तपसा विन्दते महत्||'.

After offering obeisance to the sages in *Kamyakavana, Pandavas* go on a pilgrimage and reach *Prabhasakshetra* on the west coast of India, where *Krishna* comes to meet them along with *Vrishnis*. *Yudhishthira* welcomes them with honour and narrates the loneliness and misery suffered with *Arjuna's* absence in search of *divine* weapons from the gods, hearing which *Vrishnis* express satisfaction.

Seeing the discontent among both the sides, *Balarama* wonders whether happiness does ever follow righteousness seeing noble *Pandavas* suffering in spite of their noble conduct while *Duryodhana* enjoys wealth and wide regions in spite of his evil actions. It would nothing unusual for people to think that unrighteousness is preferable to performance of righteous actions 'न कृष्ण धर्मश्चरितो भवाय जन्तोरधर्मश्च पराभवाय | युधिष्ठिरो यत्र जटी महात्मा वनाश्रयः क्लिश्यति चीरवासाः || दुर्योधनश्चापि महीं प्रशास्ति न चास्य भूमिर्विवरं ददाति | धर्मादधर्मश्चरितो गरीयानितीव मन्येत नरोऽल्पबुद्धिः || दुर्योधने चापि विवर्धमाने युधिष्ठिरे चासुखमात्तराज्ये | किं न्वत्र कर्तव्यमिति प्रजाभिः शङ्का मिथः संजनिता नराणाम्||'.

Satyaki then said that it is not the time to lament but to take decision to extend their help, even if *Yudhishthira* on his own does not request for help. Those who have friends in this world do not commence the enterprise all by themselves; their well-wishers coming forward to help. It would be proper that this very day *Yadava* armies fight *Kauaravas* and give *Pandavas* their right. While *Krishna* is happy with his response, he informs that perhaps neither *Yudhishthira* nor his brothers would prefer kingdom which they have not won by their own strength and valour. They will not do any unrighteous act through desire, fear or greed. *Yudhishthira* appreciates these words spoken by *Krishna* and tells *Satyaki* that it was quite proper for him to speak thus because for him सत्य, truth is the primary thing that promotes him to action. Therefore, when *Krishna* considers the time appropriate, he will surely seek his support to defeat *Duryodhana*. Therefore, he requests them for the time being to go back to *Dvaraka*, with confidence that he can rely on their help 'यदैव कालं पुरुषप्रवीर वेत्स्यत्यथ माधव विक्रमस्य | तदा रणे त्वं च शिनिप्रवीर सुयोधनं ज्येष्यसि केशवश्च || प्रतिप्रयान्त्वद्य दशार्हवीरा दृष्टोऽस्मि नाथैर्नरलोकनाथैः |'. Then he bids them all and continues with his pilgrimage.

Even after completing their pilgrimage, when *Yudhishthira* seeing that *Arjuna* has not yet arrived expresses his uneasiness, who he considers brave like *Krishna* and *Kartavirya* and victorious like *Balarama* - 'तस्य दहति गात्राणि तूलराशिमिवानलः | यच्च वीरं न पश्यामि धनंजयमुपान्तिकम्, तस्य दःशनिपुणा मा मानुजं वनमाश्रितम्|..वासुदेवसम वीर्ये कार्तवीर्यसमं युधि | अजेयमजितं युद्धे तं न पश्यामि फाल्गुनम्|| सङ्कर्षणं महावीर्यं त्वां च भीमपराजितम्, अनुयातः स्ववीर्येण वासुदेवं च शत्रुहा ||'. In his shoulders he sees strength of *Indra* and swiftness of *Vayu*, in his face the serenity of the Moon and in his anger he sees *Death*. Being eager to see *Arjuna* they depart to *Gandhamadana* mountain at the foot hills of *Himalayas*, where nestles hermitage of *Nara* and *Narayana* They travel to that place on foot with their mind restrained, eating little food where no cruel, greedy or ignoble ones can approach 'विशाला बदरी यत्र नरनारायणाश्रमः | . . पर्वतैर्भिर्व गमिष्यामस्तपसन्यमाना मनस्तप || ते वयं नियतात्मानः पर्वतं गन्धमादनम्, पद्भ्यामेव गमिष्यामो धनंजयदिदृक्षवः ||'. Even as they were conversing among them, there descends a divine chariot from the sky, in which they see

Arjuna sitting fully equipped with powerful and *divine weapons.* Seeing *Yudhishthira, Arjuna* gets down and offering his obeisance to *Guru Dhaumya* proceeds to *Yudhishthira* and *Bhima*. Then he embraces *Nakula* and *Sahadeva* and comforting *Draupadi* stations himself near his elder brother.

Yudhishthira is pleased with *Arjuna* having received so many divine weapons and praises the *divine will* and their good fortune that now they can be sure to win and regain their kingdom - 'दिष्ट्या धनंजयास्त्राणि त्वया प्राप्तानि भारत | दिष्ट्या चाराधितो राजा देवानामीश्वरः प्रभुः || दिष्ट्या च भगवान्स्थाणुर्देव्या सह परंतप | साक्षाद् दृष्टः सुयुद्धेन तोषितश्च त्वयानघ || दिष्ट्या च लोकपालैस्त्वं समेतो भरतर्षभ | दिष्ट्या वर्धामहे पार्थ दिष्ट्यासि पुनरागतः || अद्य कृत्स्नां महीं देवीं विजिता पुरमालिनीम् मन्ये च धृतराष्ट्रस्य पुत्रानपि वशीकृतान्||'.

Yudhishthira was so overwhelmed seeing *Arjuna* possessing the divine weapons that he expresses his desire to see their display 'इच्छामि तानि चास्त्राणि द्रष्टुं दिव्यानि भारत | यैस्तथा वीर्यवन्तस्ते निवातकवचा हताः ||'. When the subsequent day *Arjuna* displays them, then the ground under his feet sank and storm arose in the ocean, mountains withered and the winds stood unmoving, Sun became pale and fire feared to burn. The creatures even beneath the earth became agitated pleading to be saved. Seeing these strange incidents great seers, adepts, creatures, gods, fairies, *asuras*, heavenly bodies, birds as well as *Brhama*, with deities presiding over the quarters, *Shiva* with all his followers gathered around *Arjuna* 'समाक्रान्ता मही पद्भ्यां समकम्पत सद्रुमा | क्षुभिताः सरितश्चैव तथैव च महोदधिः || शैलाश्चापि व्यदीर्यन्त न ववौ च समीरणः | न बभासे सहस्रांशुर्न जज्वाल च पावकः || ..अन्तर्भूमिगता ये च प्राणिनो जनमेजय || पीड्यमानाः समुत्थाय पाण्डवं पर्यवारयन् वेपमानाः प्राञ्जलयस्ते सर्वे विकृताननाः || दह्यमानास्तदास्त्रैस्ते याचन्ति स्म धनंजयम् ततो ब्रह्मर्षयश्चैव सिद्धा ये च महर्षयः || जङ्गमानि च भूतानि सर्वाण्येवावतस्थिरे | देवर्षयश्च प्रवरास्तथैव च पतत्रिणः | खेचराणि च भूतानि सर्वाण्येवावतस्थिरे || ततः पितामहश्चैव लोकपालाश्च सर्वशः | भगवांश्च महादेवः सगणोऽभ्याययौ तदा ||'.

Seeing these unusual events *Narada* arrives there cautioning *Arjuna* not to use these *divine weapons* in this manner without any focus or purpose. They become more powerful and propitious when kept safe in reserve or else they destroy the whole world. Therefore he should use them only for *the intent and purpose* for which they have been given to him. Thus advised, *Arjuna* withdraws them.

Yudhishthira then in consultation with his brothers and *Draupadi* decide to shift from *Gandhamadana* mountain and thanking the mountain for sheltering them he promises that he will return to visit the mountain again after defeating *Kauravas*. Then they all go to *Kamyakavana* where *Krishna* comes along with *Satyabhama* to meet them after long absence. Seeing *Arjuna* he embraces affectionately. He consoles *Draupadi* even as *Satyabhama* embraces her. Seeing all the brothers gathering around him, *Krishna* assures *Yudhishthira* that since their exile will

soon come to end and *Arjuna* having acquired *divine* weapons, the time has come for them to regain their lost kingdom. Wishing them best in their efforts he assures them help on behalf of his associate tribes and wishing good fortune leaves for *Dvaraka*.

Here in *Hastinapur*, *Dhritarashtra* hearing that *Arjuna* has been graced with powerful weapons becomes worried with the possible danger and irritated with his evil sons who have been the cause. He complains sleeplessness his dull witted son being impervious to him, considering him a blind old man - 'मम पुत्रा दुरात्मनः सर्वे मृत्युवशानुगाः | येषां युद्धं दुराधर्षैः पाण्डवैः प्रत्युपस्थितम् || तथैव च न पश्यामि युधि गाण्डीवधन्वनः | अनीशश्चिन्तयामानोऽपि य एनमुदियाद्रथी ||..ममापि वचनं सूत न शुश्रूषति मन्दभाक् दृष्ट्वा मां चक्षुषा हीनं निर्विचेष्टमचेतनम्||'. But *Sanjaya* points out that for this no one can be held responsible except the King himself - 'व्यतिक्रमोऽयं सुमहांस्त्वया राजन्नुपेक्षितः | समर्थेनापि यन्मोहात्पुत्रास्ते न निवारिताः ||', especially when *Krishna* has assured *Draupadi* that a gruesome death for *Duryodhana* is certain with his flesh being devoured by crows and eagles and blood soaking the earth 'पाञ्चाली पाहुर्क्लिष्टा वासुदेवस्य शृण्वतः | दुर्योधनस्तव क्रोधाद्देवि त्यक्ष्यति जीवितम्|| पतिजानीमहे सत्यं मा शुचो वरवर्णिनि | ये स्म तेऽक्षजिता कृष्णे दृष्ट्वा त्वां प्राहसन्तदा | मांसानि तेषां खादन्तो हर्ष्यन्ति वृकद्विजाः || पास्यन्ति रुधिरं तेषां गृध्रा गोमायवस्तथा | उत्तमाङ्गानि कर्षन्तो यैः कृष्टासि सभातले || तेषां द्रक्ष्यसि पाञ्चालि गात्राणि पृथिवीतले | क्रव्यादैः कृष्यमाणानि भक्ष्यमाणानि चासकृत्||'. Listening to *Sanjaya's* admonition, *Dhritarashtra* goes in further depression remembering what *Vidura* had also told him earlier that the game of dice will bring the blood of the *Kauravas* to flow, the exile culminating in to a gruesome war - 'ध्रुवं कुरूणामयमन्तकालो महाभयो भविता शोणितौघः ||.. असंशयं भविता युद्धमेतद्गते काले पाण्डवानां यथोक्तम्||'.

When *Dhritarashtra* comes to know that *Arjuna,* reaching the heavenly world in this very corporeal body and came back well-endowed with divine weapons and that *Krishna* visited them, he expresses his distress for not having done justice falling prey to wishes of *Duryodhana.* He calls him and others like *Dushasana, Karna* and *Shakuni* as dull-witted ones expecting to conquer worlds playing a game of dice. *Shakuni* fond of gambling has not done the right thing observing only honey in bee-hive without realizing the danger looming high. It is his good fortune that *Yudhishthira* did not kill him there and then - 'दुर्योधनः शकुनिः सूतपुत्रो दुःशासनश्चापि सुमन्दचेताः | मधु प्रपश्यन्ति न तु प्रपात यद्द्यूतमानस्य हरन्ति राज्यम्|| . . कृतं मनाक्षेण यथा न साधु साधुप्रवृत्तेन च पाण्डवेन | मया च दुष्पुत्रवशानुगेन तथा कुरूणामयमन्तकालः ||'. He laments that time has come for *Kauravas* to die, otherwise who would have expected any one to return from heavens live and in the very corporeal world 'गतो ह्यरण्यादपि शक्रलोकं धनंजयः पश्यत वीर्यमस्य | अस्त्राणि दिव्यानि चतुर्विधानि ज्ञात्वा पुनर्लोकमिमं प्रपन्नः || स्वर्गं हि गत्वा सशरीर एव को मानुषः पुनरागन्तुमिच्छेत्| अन्यत्र कालोपहतानेनकान्समीक्षमाणस्तु कुरून्मुमूर्षून्||'.

When *Shakuni* heard this he goes and reports to *Duryodhana.* He suggests that along with *Karna* they should go the forest at that very moment with all their glory and splendour so that *Pandavas'* pride may he hurt, since nothing give one more pleasure than seeing enemies in distress and living in poverty and wearing clothes made of barks 'न पुत्रधनलाभेन न राज्येनापि विन्दति | प्रीतिं नृपतिशार्दूल यामामित्राघदर्शनात्|| किं नु तस्य सुखं न स्यादाश्रमे यो धनंजयम्| अभिवीक्षेत सिद्धार्थो वल्कलाजिनवाससम्|| सुवाससो हि ते भार्या वल्कलाजिनसंवृताम्| पश्यन्तु दुःखिता कृष्णा सा च निर्विद्यता पुनः ||. *Duryodhana* was thrilled with the suggestion especially at the prospect of seeing *Draupadi* in miserable condition. But he sees no way of receiving *Dhritarashtra's* permission to go there - 'ममापि हि महान्हर्षो यदहं भीमफाल्गुनौ | क्लिष्टावरण्ये पश्येयं कृष्णया सहितावित || न तथा ह्याप्नुया प्रीतिमवाप्य वसुधामिमाम्, दृष्ट्वा यथा पाण्डुसुतान्वल्कलाजिनवाससः || यदि मां धर्मराजश्च भीमसेनश्च पाण्डवः | युक्तं परमया लक्ष्म्या पश्येता जीवितं भवेत्|| उपायं न तु पश्यामि येन गच्छेम तद्वनम्'. With *Shakuni* by his side, he need not have worried, for soon they go to *Dhritarashtra* with the proposal, who agrees thinking that it would pacify their mind in hunting and finding good pasture for the cattle 'ततः प्रहसिताः सर्वे तेऽन्योन्यस्य तलान्ददुः | तदेव च विनिश्चित्य ददृशुः कुरुसत्तमम् ||.

When they reach *Dvaitavana,* they find that *Gandharvas* were already camping there with their entourage. When *Duryodhana's* soldiers rudely ask them to vacate the place, they refuse and in the fierce battle *Kauravas* are defeated miserably by *Gandharvas* with their illusory power. *Duryodhana, Karna* and *Shakuni* are wounded with *Karna's* chariot destroyed forcing him to take shelter in *Vikarna's* chariot 'ततो रथादवप्लुत्य सूतपुत्रोऽसिचर्मभृत्| विकर्णरथमास्थाय सांक्षायाः वाजिनोदयत्||'. Further when *Duryodhana* taken prisoner by *Chitrasena* along with *Dushasana* was being taken away, remaining *Kauravas* accompanied by their ministers approach *Yudhishthira* for help. Seeing them beg for help, *Bhima* sarcastically remarks that *Gandharvas* complete stranger have finished what they themselves would otherwise have had to do by using great army, leaving them happy 'महता हि प्रयत्नेन संनह्य गजवाजिभिः | अस्माभिर्यदनुष्ठेयं गन्धर्वैस्तदनुष्ठितम्|| अन्यथा वर्तमानानामर्थो जातोऽयमन्यथा | दुर्मन्त्रितमिदं तावद् राज्ञो दुर्द्यूतदेविनः दौपारमन्ये क्लीबस्य पातयन्तीति नः श्रुतम्| इदं कृतं नः प्रत्यक्ष गन्धर्वैरतिमानुषम्||'.

These words spoken by *Bhima* did not please *Yudhishthira,* who rebukes him that it is common for brothers to quarrel with each other but when it comes to outsiders, they should not enjoy their misfortune but proceed to help them against the outsiders. Taking *Duryodhana* as a prisoner by force by an outsider along with their womenfolk would affect the family's eminence. Therefore, they should offer succor to them and protect the family without delay 'भवन्ति भेदा ज्ञातीनां कलहाश्च वृकोदर | प्रसक्तानि च वैराणि कुलधर्मो न नश्यति || यदा तु कश्चिज्ज्ञातीनां बाह्यः प्रार्थयते कुलम्| न मर्षयन्ति तत्सन्तो बाह्येनाभिप्रधर्षणम्| दुर्योधनस्य ग्रहणाद्गन्धर्वेण बलात्प्रभो | स्त्रीणां बाह्याभिमर्शाच्च हतं भवति नः कुलम्|| शरणं च प्रपन्नानां त्राणार्थं च कुलस्य च | उत्तिष्ठत नरव्याघ्र सज्जीभवत माचिरम्||'.

Even while *Bhima* was thus being exhorted to go and fight for his release, *Duryodhana* humiliated was desperately pleading *Yudhishthira* to come to his aid - 'पाण्डुपुत्र महाबाहो सर्वधर्मभृतां वर, श्रेष्ठ गन्धर्वेण हृतं बलात्|| रक्षस्व पुरुषव्याघ्र युधिष्ठिर महायशः || भ्रातरं ते महाबाहो बद्ध्वा नयति मामयम्| दुःशासन दुर्विषह दुर्मुख दुर्जय तथा || बद्ध्वा हरन्ति गन्धर्वा अस्मद्दाराश्च सर्वशः | अनुधावत मां क्षिप्रं रक्षध्व पुरुषोत्तमाः || वृकोदर महाबाहो धनंजय महायशः | यमौ मामनुधावतां रक्षार्थं मम सायुधौ || कुरुवंशस्य तु महद्यशः प्राप्स्यथ पाण्डवा | व्यपोहयध्व गन्धर्वाञ्जित्वा वीर्येण पाण्डवाः ||'. Seeing a *Kuru* family number thus being humiliated, *Yudhishthira* becomes compassionate and to help one who has come with folded hand. Though saving

an enemy from danger is laudable it is surely a travesty that *Duryodhana* should desire to be saved with the help of his enemies? If *Yudhishthira* had not already busy in performance of sacrifice then he would have gone to his help. He approaches *Gandharvas* to release them through conciliatory words and if they refuse then through force 'क इहार्यो भवेन्त्राणामभिधावेति नोदितः | प्राञ्जलिं शरणापन्नं दृष्ट्वा शत्रुमपि ध्रुवम्||... किं वाप्यधिकमेतस्मादयदापन्नः सुयोधनः | त्वद्वाहुबलमाश्रित्य जीवितं परिमार्गति || स्वयमेव प्रधावेयं यदि न स्याद्वृकोदर | विततो मे क्रतुर्वीर न हि मेऽत्र विचारणा || सान्त्वेव तु यथा भीम मोक्षयेथाः सुयोधनम्| तथा सर्वैरुपायैस्त्वं यतेथाः कुरुनन्दन || न साम्ना प्रतिपद्येतयदि गन्धर्वराडसौ | पराक्रमेन मृदुना मोक्षयेथाः सुयोधनम् ||.

When he spoke thus, *Arjuna* vows to defeat *Gandharvas* and release *Duryodhana* from being captured. When *Bhima* and *Arjuna* get him released, *Yudhishthira* thanks *Gandharvas* for not harming them. Then speaking affectionately, he tells *Kauravas* not to undertake such foolish ventures but go safely back to *Hastinapura*, 'मा स्म तात पुनः कार्षीरीदृशं साहसं क्वचित्| न हि साहसकर्तारः सुखमेधन्ति भारत || स्वस्तिमान्सहितः सर्वैर्भ्रातृभिः कुरुनन्दन | गृहान् व्रज यथाकामं वैमनस्यं च मा कृथाः ||'. *Kauravas* return humiliated in mind and heart, with *Duryodhana* sinking further in depression.

To instill in him confidence, *Karna* begins praising him for the stiff fight which he gave. But *Duryodhana* sadly tells him that surely he does not know the details otherwise he would not have spoken as though he himself has won the battle. But being his close friend his words have not hurt nor being defeated and taken to *Yudhishthira* by *Gandharvas* along with his brothers and their wives with hands and feet bound and that it was he who got them released with *Arjuna's* extra-ordinary skill in archery, instead it would have been better if he was killed in the battle - 'अजानस्ते राधेय नाभ्यसूयाम्यहं वचः | जानासि त्वं जितान्शत्रून्गन्धर्वोस्तेजसामया ||..पराजयं च प्राप्ताः स्मो रणे बन्धनमेव च | सभृत्यामात्यपुत्राश्च सदारबलवाहनाः ||... अथ नः सैनिकाः केचिदमात्याश्च महारथाः || उपगम्याब्रुवन्दीनाः पाण्डवाञ्शरणप्रदान्|| एष दुर्योधनो राजा धार्तराष्ट्रः सहानुज | सामात्यदारो ह्रियते गन्धर्वैर्दिवमाश्रितैः | न मोक्षयत भद्रं वः सहदारं नराधिपम्|| पराभवो मा भविष्यत्कुरुदारेषु सर्वशः | एवमुक्ते तु धर्मात्मा ज्येष्ठः पाण्डुसुतस्तदा || प्रसाद्य पाण्डवान् सर्वानाज्ञापयत मोक्षणे |'. In fact at that moment he felt ashamed wishing the earth under his feet would split wide open and he would be sink therein, 'नास्मिन्नुच्चर्यमाणं तु गन्धर्वेण वचस्तथा || भूमेर्विवरमन्वैच्छं प्रवेष्टुं व्रीडयान्वितः |'. Now it is difficult for him to see *Pandavas* still alive and powerful 'भ्रातृनर्हसि मे वीर मोक्तुं गन्धर्वसत्तम | अनर्हदर्पणा हीमे जीवमानेषु पाण्डुषु ||', especially *Chitrasena* having informed that *Kauarvas* had come to see them and *Draupadi* humiliated.

Therefore he does not desire to live any more. Saying that he who was the lord over people has now stands overpowered by his own fault and it is humiliating for him to return to the capital and show his face to the elders. It is indeed true that a person proud of himself can never hope to remain proud, though possesses wealth, wisdom, and splendour, when he looses reputation due to arrogance and hatred 'रिपूणां शिरसि स्थित्वा तथा विक्रम्य चोरसि | आत्मदोषात्परिभ्रष्टः कथं वक्ष्यामि तानहम्|| दुर्विनीताः श्रियं प्राप्य विद्यामैश्वर्यमेव च | तिष्ठन्ति न चिरं भद्रं यथाहं मदगर्वितः ||'. Then he summons *Dushasana* and desires to crown him in his place, so that with help of *Shakuni* and *Karna* he could rule this land better, 'प्रतीच्छ त्वं मया दत्तमभिषेकं नृपो भव | प्रशाधि पृथिवीं स्फीतां कर्णसौबलपालिताम्||'. But *Dushansana* devoted to his brother is shocked and declines - 'विदीर्येत्सकला भूमिर्द्यौश्चापि शकलीभवेत्| रविरात्मप्रभां जह्यात्सोमः शीतांशुतां त्यजेत्|| वायुः शैघ्र्यमथो जह्याद्धिमवांश्च परिव्रजेत्| शुष्येत् तोयं समुद्रेषु वह्निरप्युष्णतां त्यजेत्|| न चाहं त्वदृते राजन्प्रशासेयं वसुन्धराम्| पुनःपुनः प्रसीदेति वाक्यं चेदमुवाच च || त्वमेव नः कुले राजा भविष्यसि शतं समाः |'.

This is one extra-ordinary moment of introspection for the forces of darkness which were in conflict with the forces of light. Seeing *Duryodhana* thus despondent, poet says that *asuras* became exceedingly concerned and agitated. They crowd around him reminding him the purpose for which he was born and for whose sake many other *asuras* have also taken descent in the world or have entered the bodies of *Bhishma*, *Drona*, *Kripa* and others to obscure their mind and weaken their resolve as assistance in fulfilling his ordained purpose. In *Karna* there is *Narakasura's* soul whom *Krishna* having killed earlier. Therefore, this is not the time for him to think of deserting them, because by doing so their cause will surely be defeated. They reminded him that luminous forces, the gods are actively helping *Pandavas* and there is no one else who could be the source for them - 'अस्त्रैरभेद्यः शस्त्रैश्चाप्यधः कायश्च तेऽनघ | कृतः पुष्पमयो देव्या रूपतः स्त्री मनोहरः || .. तदलं ते विषादेन भयं ते न विद्यते | साहाय्यार्थं च ते वीराः सम्भूता भुवि दानवाः || भीष्मद्रोणकृपादींश्च प्रवेक्ष्यन्त्यपरेऽसुराः | यैराविष्टा घृणां त्यक्त्वा योत्स्यन्ते तव वैरिभिः || . . प्रहरिष्यन्ति विवशाः स्नेहमुत्सृज्य दूरतः | दृष्टाः पुरुषशार्दूलाः कलुषीकृतमानसाः | अविज्ञानविमूढाश्च दैवाच्च

विधिनिर्मितात्॥ . . हतस्य नरकस्यात्मा कर्णमूर्तिमुपाश्रितः । तद्वैरं संस्मरन्वीर योत्स्यते केशवार्जुनौ ॥ . . मा विषादं गमस्तस्मान्नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते । विनष्टे त्वयि चास्माकं पक्षो हीयेत कौरव ॥ गच्छ वीर न ते बुद्धिरन्या कार्या कथंचन । त्वमस्माकं गतिर्नित्यं देवतानां च पाण्डवाः ॥. Hearing these words as if in a dream, *Duryodhana* becomes composed and renews his resolve to fight the *Pandavas*. *Karna* comes to know of his resolve, he embraces him telling only he who is alive can fight for his honour, not a dead one 'न मृतो जयते शत्रुञ्जीवन्भद्राणि पश्यति । मृतस्य भद्राणि कुतः कौरव कुतो जयः ॥' Then thus assured *Duryodhana* enters *Hastinapur*.

Chapter V

On *Duryodhana's* return, defeated and despondent, *Dhritarashtra, Bhishma* and *Drona* counsel him again to live in peace with *Pandavas*. But obscurity created by the forces was so powerful and compelling that the recent humiliation fueled his mind afresh making him leave their presence without a word being spoken. *Karna* to instill confidence in him brings untold wealth and tributes for him from an expedition, which pleases *Duryodhana* with satisfaction and gratitude saying that what he did not get from *Bhishma, Drona* and others he has received from him 'यन्न भीष्मान्न च द्रोणान्न कृपान्न च बाल्हिकात्। प्राप्तवानस्मि भद्रं ते त्वत्तः प्राप्तं मयाद्य तत्॥ बहुना च किमुक्तेन श्रुणु कर्ण वचो मम। सनाथोऽस्मि महाबाहो त्वया नाथेन सत्तम।'. Encouraged by vicarious pleasure, he tells *Karna* that *Pandavas* do not stand in comparison even sixteenth measure and speaks to *Karna* to present himself before his parents displaying same valor. These arrogant remarks please some and not the others, while others remain silent.

Puffed up with pride, *Karna* then assures *Duryodhana* that having many rulers under his control he should now rule the world. And equally in magnanimous words *Duryodhana* commends him declaring that when he has such friends like *Karna* why should not b possible for him to do. He has a wish to perform *Raajasuya* sacrifice as was done by *Yudhishthira*, and you can fulfill the same 'न किंचिद्दुर्लभं तस्य यस्य त्वं पुरुषर्षभ॥ सहायश्चानुरक्तश्च मदर्थं च समुद्यतः। अभिप्रायस्तु मे कश्चित्तं वै श्रुणु यथातथम्॥ राजसूयं पाण्डवस्य दृष्ट्वा क्रतुवरं महत्। मम स्पृहा समुत्पन्ना तां संपादय सूतज॥'. Then they all approach *Dhritarashtra* for permission to perform *Rajasuya Yajna*. The family priest, however, overrides the request saying that he cannot perform the sacrifice so long as *Yudhishthira* elder to him is alive, beside his father being also alive 'न स शक्यः क्रतुश्रेष्ठो जीवमाने युधिष्ठिरे॥ आहर्तुं कौरवश्रेष्ठ कुले तव नृपोत्तम। दीर्घायुर्जीवति च ते धार्तराष्ट्रः पिता नृप॥ अतश्चापि विरुद्धस्ते क्रतुरेष नृपोत्तम॥'. Instead performance of equally powerful *Vaishnava Yajna* is suggested, which was never performed by any one other than *Vishnu* in ancient era. *Vaishnava Yajna* is equally comparable and powerful like *Rajasuya Yajna* 'एष ते वैष्णवो नाम यज्ञः सत्पुरुषोचितः॥ एतेन नेष्टवान्कश्चिदृते विष्णुं पुरातनम्। राजसूयं क्रतुश्रेष्ठं स्पर्धत्येष महाक्रतुः॥ अस्माकं रोचते चैव श्रेयश्च तव भारत। निर्विघ्नश्च भवत्येष सफला स्यात्स्पृहा तव॥'.

Duryodhana agrees with the suggestion and begins preparation for the sacrifice, to the great satisfaction of *Dhritarashtra, Bhishma, Vidura, Drona* and others. Then invitations are sent to all the kings and to *Pandavas* in *Dvaitavana* as well to participate in the *Vaishnava* sacrifice. *Yudhishthira* approvingly commends the action saying that *Duryodhana* has fortunately undertaken the sacrifice well for increasing the fame of his ancestors but they will not be able to attend not having completed the terms of exile '...दिष्ट्या राजा सुयोधनः। यजते क्रतुमुख्येन पूर्वेषां कीर्तिवर्धनः॥ वयमप्युपयास्यामो न त्विदानीं कथंचन। समयः परिपाल्यो नो यावद्वर्षं त्रयोदशम्॥'. Hearing these words spoken by his elder brother, *Bhima* disapproves saying that they will henceforth meet *Duryodhana* on the battle field to offer *Kauravas* as oblation only after the exile ends 'तदा तु नृपतिर्गन्ता धर्मराजो युधिष्ठिरः॥ अस्त्रशस्त्रप्रदीप्तेऽग्नौ यदा तं पातयिष्यति। वर्षात्त्रयोदशादूर्ध्वं रणसत्रे नराधिपः॥ यदा क्रोधहविर्मोक्ता धार्तराष्ट्रेषु पाण्डवः। आगन्ताहं तदास्मीति वाच्यस्ते स सुयोधनः॥'.

The completion of the sacrifice makes *Dhritarashtra* happy, some comparing it with those performed by the ancestors earlier and others declaring it not even one-sixteenth splendorous as the one performed by *Yudhishthira* 'युधिष्ठिरस्य यज्ञेन न समो ह्येष ते क्रतुः॥ नैव तस्य क्रतोरेष कलामर्हति षोडशीम्'. *Karna* congratulates him for the successful completion assuring that similar sacrifice should again be performed after he kills *Pandavas* in the war 'दिष्ट्या ते भरतश्रेष्ठ समाप्तोऽयं महाक्रतुः। हतेषु युधि पार्थेषु राजसूये तथा त्वया॥'. Pleased with his words, *Duryodhana* embraces *Karna* who responds with a vow that then he will neither served by others nor will he eat cooked food, nor undertake intense austerities, nor deny charity - 'पादौ न धावये तावद्यावन्न निहतोऽर्जुनः॥ कीलालजं न खादेयं करिष्ये चासुरव्रतम्। नास्तीति नैव वक्ष्यामि याचितो येन केनचित्॥'. This makes *Kauravas* exceedingly pleased.

Duryodhana also performs many charitable and beneficial acts to win support from people.

Here in *Kamyakavana, Yudhishthira* expresses his repentance for his brothers and *Draupadi* sufferings without complaint which is caused by his own actions. *Vyasa* comes few months before their exile was to end and consoles them that no one gets happiness without perseverance. Therefore one should experience pleasures in the spirit of renunciation and suffer pains without complaining - 'युधिष्ठिर महाबाहो श्रुणु धर्मभृतां वर || नातप्ततपसा लोके प्राप्नुवन्ति महासुखम्| सुखदुःखे हि पुरुषः पर्यायेणोपसेवते || न ह्यनन्तं सुखं कश्चित्प्राप्नोति पुरुषर्षभ | प्रज्ञावांस्त्वेव पुरुषः संयुक्तः परया धिया || उदयास्तमनसा हि न हृष्यति न शोचति | सुखमापतितं सेवेद् दुःखमापतितं वहेत ||..सुखमापतितं सेवेद् दुःखमापतितं वहेत्|| कालप्राप्तमुपासीत सस्यानमिव कर्षकः | तपसो हि परं नास्ति तपसा विन्दते महत्|| नासाध्यं तपसः किंचिदिति बुद्ध्यस्व भारत ||'.

Kauarvas were not the ones to keep quiet, their intention being more immoral and reprehensible. Therefore, they prevail upon an unsuspecting sage *Durvasa*, known for instant anger to visit *Pandavas* in *Kamayakavana* after they have finished their food for the day. The sage who was pleased with *Duryodhana's* grand reception accordingly visits *Pandavas* with his vast entourage after they have finished their food and asks for food. Having cleaned the never ending vessel अक्षयपात्र given to them by *Surya*, which provides food only once in the day, *Draupadi* becomes confused. She shrewdly suggests him that they should take bath in the river for the food to be prepared. When they depart, she beseeches *Krishna* to come to her aid even as he did when she was in trouble in *Kaurava's* assembly. *Krishna* comes instantly 'एवं स्तुतस्तदा देवः कृष्णया भक्तवत्सलः | द्रौपद्याः संकटं ज्ञात्वा देवदेवो जगत्पतिः || पार्श्वस्थां शयने त्यक्त्वा रुक्मिणीं केशवः प्रभुः | तत्रा जगाम त्वरितो ह्यचिन्त्यगतिरीश्वरः ||' and himself asks her for some food. When she tells him that the अक्षयपात्र has been washed for the day, and therefore she cannot provide any more food for the day, he asks the vessel to be shown to him. He sees one single grain of rice stuck to the vessel, which he eats and feels fully satisfied, declaring that he who is the soul of all creatures is satisfied 'विश्वात्मा प्रीयतां देवस्तुष्टश्चास्त्विति यज्ञभुक्|' therefore the entire creatures in the world also will be satisfied. Miraculously here on the river bank, *Durvas* and his followers also feel fully satisfied. *Durvasa* through his supra-sensory wisdom realizes this event as not an ordinary one but by which *Krishna* has saved *Pandavas* and has foiled *Kauravas'* nefarious intentions in which he had been made an unwilling and unsuspecting instrument. Remembering an earlier instance when he had to face Lord's for having troubled a great devotee *Ambarisha*, he hastily departs with his followers without going for their meals, since *Pandavas*, since Pandavas too were *Krishna's* friends. *Pandavas* wait for them realizing the reason for their sudden departure.

During their stay in the forest, *Jayadratha*, the ruler of *Sindh* who was married to *Duryodhana's* sister *Dushala*, happens to see *Draupadi* and not recognizing her, is infatuated by her beauty. But in spite of her revealing her identity, he seizes her forcibly, telling that she does to deserve to live with *Pandavas* who are destitute but with a ruler like him. When *Arjuna* comes to know the annoyance which *Draupadi* is facing, he chases *Jayadratha* and brings him back a prisoner, shaving his head as *Yudhishthira's* slave -'दासोऽय मुच्यतां राजन्त्वया पञ्चसटः कृत |'. But since he was a brother-in-law *Yudhishthira* releases him warning him not to do such despicable deed again The brothers and *Draupadi* though furious allow him to go 'सरोष भीमसेनं तु वारयामास फाल्गुन | दुःशलाया. कृते राजा यत्तदाहेति कौरव ||'.

Distressed by this humiliation *Jayadratha* performs a great penance to please *Shiva*, but receives no help in avenging the humiliation except and assurance that be will be able to face other *Pandava* brothers when *Arjuna* himself is away from the battle field. *Arjuna* is नर who had performed in *Badari* sacrifices along with नारायण therefore no one not even the gods, are capable in the three worlds to defeat him having already received from him the formidable *Pashpata* weapon and other weapons from other gods 'अजय्यांश्चाप्यवध्यांश्च वारयिष्यसि तान्युधि || ऋतेऽर्जुनं महाबाहुं नरं नाम सुरेश्वरम्| बदर्यां नारायणसहायकम्|... अजितं सर्वलोकानां देवैरपि दुरासदम्| मया दत्तं पाशुपतं दिव्यमप्रतिमं शरम्| अवाप लोकपालेभ्यो वज्रादीनस महाशरान्|..न शक्यसे तेन जेतु त्रिदशैरपि दुःसहः | कः पुनर्मानुषो भावो रणे पार्थं विजेष्यसि || तमेकं वर्जयित्वा तु सर्वं यौधिष्ठिरं बलम्| चतुरः पाण्डवान्दिनैक जेष्यसे रिपून्|'.

When the twelve years of exile was to coming close and thirteenth was about to begin, *Indra*,

from whose essence *Arjuna* was born, wishing him well, decides to deprive *Karna* of his divine ear-rings and armour which had made him unconquerable. *Surya* of from whose essence *Karna* was born, comes to know of this plan and approaches *Karna* in dream, dressed as *Brahmin.* He cautions him that *Indra* may approach him for charity, dressed as a *Brahmin,* knowing his well-established renown as a charitable person. At that time he may give every thing but never part with his divine ear-rings and armour, lest by doing so his life-span may stand reduced 'यदि दास्यसि कर्ण त्वं महजे कुण्डले शुभे | आयुषः प्रक्षयं गत्वा मृत्योर्व शमुपैष्यसि . . अमृतादुत्थितं ह्येनमुभयं रत्नसम्भवम्| तस्माद्रक्ष्यं त्वया कर्ण जीवतं चेत्प्रियं तव ||'.

When *Karna* asks him his identification, he tells him that he is *Surya*, his well-wisher come to caution him. *Karna* replies that if he is a well-wisher, he should not prevent him fulfilling his vow and if *Indra* asks for his divine ear-rings and armour to favour *Pandavas* then he will gladly part with them and even his life but would never do any act which will harm his renown in the three worlds 'यद्यागच्छति मां शक्रो ब्राह्मणच्छद्मना वृतः | हितार्थं पाण्डुपुत्राणां खेचरोत्तम भिक्षितुम्|| दास्यामि विबुधश्रेष्ठ कुण्डले वर्म चोत्तमम्| न मे कीर्तिः प्रणश्येत त्रिषु लोकेषु विश्रुता || युक्तं हि यशसा युक्त मरणं लोकसम्मतम्||...हितार्थं पाण्डुपुत्राणां कुण्डले मे प्रयाचितुम्| तते कीर्तिकरं लोके तस्याकीर्तिर्भविष्यति || वृणोमि कीर्तिं लोके हि जीवितेनापि भानुमन्| कीर्तिमान्श्नुते स्वर्गं हीनकीर्तिस्तु नश्यति || पुरुषस्य परे लोके कीर्तिरिव परायणम्| इह लोके विशुद्धा च कीर्तिरायुर्विवर्धिनी || सोऽहं शरीरजे दत्त्वा कीर्तिं प्राप्स्यामि शाश्वतीम् ||..जीवितेनापि मे रक्ष्या कीर्तिस्तद्विद्धि मे व्रतम्||'. Seeing his firm decision, *Surya* says that of that is not agreeable then he should request from *Indra* a powerful weapon in return, which he will not be able to refuse 'अमोघां देहि मे शक्तिममित्रविनिबर्हिणीम्| दास्यामि ते सहस्राक्ष कुण्डले वर्म चोत्तमम्|| इत्येव नियमेन त्वं दद्याः शक्राय कुण्डले | तथा त्वं कर्ण संग्रामे हनिष्यसि रणे रिपून्||'.

When a *Brahmin,* approaches *Karna* for charity, he is not recognized by him, therefore, he asks him respectfully what he could give as charity. Therefore, when the Brahmin asks nothing else but to gift his divine ear-rings and armour - 'यदेतत्सहजं वर्म कुण्डले च तवानघ | एतदुत्कृत्य मे देहि यदि सत्यव्रतो भवान्||', *Karna* expresses his inability to part with them requesting him to receive anything else. But the *Brahmin* had no other purpose in mind other than to separate *Karna* from the divine protection. *Karna* replies that he was born with the ear-rings and armour and if that is parted then he will not remain invincible - 'सहजं वर्म मे विप्र कुण्डले चामृतोद्भवे | तेनावध्योऽस्मि लोकेषु ततो नैतज्जहाम्यहम्||..कुण्डलाभ्यां विमुक्तोऽहं वर्मणा सहजेन च | गमनीयो भविष्यामि शत्रूणां द्विजसत्तम ||.

When the *Brahmin* asks no other gift, *Karna* remembers *Surya's* warning and smilingly tells him that he was already aware of his coming and that he is *Indra* the lord of the gods. Therefore, it would not be proper that he should receive any unworthy gift He forewarns him then that if he is defeated after parting his ear-rings and the armour to him, then the entire blame will come to *Indra* for having cunningly taken them away from unsuspecting *Karna*. Therefore, to save himself from such slur, it would be proper for *Indra* to give him an equally a proper weapon in return 'यदान्यं न वरं वव्रे भगवान्पाकशासनः | ततः प्रहस्य कर्णस्तं पुनरित्यब्रवीद्वचः || विदितो देवदेवेश प्रागेवासि मम प्रभो | न तु न्याय्यं मया दातुं तव शक्र वृथा वरम्||..यदि दास्यामि ते देव कुण्डले कवचं तथा | वध्यतामुपयास्यामि त्वं च शक्रावहास्यताम्|| तस्माद्विनिमयं कृत्वा कुण्डले वर्म चोत्तमम्| हरस्व शक्र कामं मे न दद्यामहमन्यथा ||'.

Indra is impressed by his candour and agrees to give him any weapon he chooses, except his thunder-bolt 'काममस्तु तथा तात तव कर्ण यथेच्छसि | वर्जयित्वा तु मे वज्रं प्रवृणीश्व यदिच्छसि ||'. *Karna* tells him to give him in exchange of his divine ear-rings and armour weapon equal in power saying - 'वर्मणा कुण्डलाभ्यां च शक्तिं मे देहि वासव | अमोघां शत्रुसंघानां घातिनीं पृतनामुखे ||'. Then *Indra* gives him a great weapon with which when issued by him had killed many *asuras* and which would return to him thereafter. When the same great weapon is issued by *Karna* will destroy great many enemies once but will return back to *Indra* having accomplished the task - 'कुण्डले मे प्रयच्छस्व वर्म चैव शरीरजम्| गृहाण कर्ण शक्तिं त्वमनेन समयेन च || अमोघा हन्ति शतशः शत्रून्मम करच्युता || पुनश्च पाणिमभ्येति मम दैत्यान्विनिघ्नतः || सेयं तव करप्राप्ता हत्वैकं रिपुमूर्जितम्| गर्जन्तं प्रतपन्तं च मामेवैष्यति सूतज ||'.

Though *Karna* agrees to gift the ear-rings and the armour, he knows that when he rips them off his body blood will ooze spoils its form acquired from birth. Therefore, he requests *Indra* that his body may be saved from being disfigured. *Indra* assures him that he would get back his earlier luminous form even after he rips them off and hands them over to him. The gods, *asuras* and *danavas* roar like lions in appreciation as well as sorrow even as no single sign of pain or sorrow was observed on *Karna's* face 'ततो

देवा मानवा दानवाश्च निकृन्तन्तं कर्णमात्मानमेवम्| दृष्ट्वा सर्वे सिंहानादान्प्रणेदुर्न ह्यास्यासीन्मुखजो वै विकारः ||'. *Indra* returns to the heavenly world with the ear-rings and the armour satisfied that his purpose is served, even as *Kauaravas* hearing the news become exceedingly mortified.

Once the thirteen years of their exile are completed *Pandavas* consider various options for living the fourteenth year *in-cognito.* Finally they decide to settle in *Matsyadesha* ruled by *Virata*, since traditionally he was known as righteous king and amenable to *Pandavas*. In order not raise avoidable suspicion and conceal their identity, they enter the city after depositing their arms and armaments safely concealed in the hollow of a thickly grown tree. Then they seek employment in the royal house hold itself, *Yudhishthira* assuming the position as king's advisor named *Kanka*, *Bhima* becomes a cook in the kitchen named *Ballava, Arjuna* named *Brihannala* teaches singing and dancing to the princess *Uttara* taking advantage of *Urvashis's* curse. *Nakula* and *Sahadeva* work as stable attendants and *Draupadi* becomes *Sairandhri*, the queen's companion.

Seeing *Sairandhri's* beauty and not knowing her real identity *Keechaka*, queen's brother covets her and is killed by *Ballava* (*Bhima*), without any one being aware of the identity of the real killer. When *Kauravas* come to know of his death, they wonder who could have killed such powerful person like *Keechaka*. Though no one could guess any one particularly since only three others - *Balarama, Bhima* and *Shalya* were string enough to kill *Keechaka* who was equally powerful. *Duryodhana* makes a reasonable guess that *Pandavas* may still be alive and the killer being no one else than *Bhima* fir the sake of *Draupadi*'तत्राहं कीचकं मन्ये भीमसेनेन मारितम्| सैरन्ध्रीं द्रौपदीं मन्ये नात्र कार्या विचारणा ||, *Pandavas* living in *Virata's* kingdom 'विराटनगरं मन्ये पाण्डवाश्छन्नचारिणः || निवसन्ति पुरे रम्ये यत्र यात्रा विधीयताम्||'.

Therefore, *Duryodhana* suggests that they should raid *Virata's* kingdom and find out the truth. If the *Pandavas* are living then they will surely come out to release them. In that way, *Pandavas* will be found out even before the completion of the thirteenth year, obliging them to spend twelve years again in exile. Either *Pandavas* will be revealed or *Virata* who is inimical to *Kauravas* will be defeated. Therefore they decide to raid *Matsya desha* 'मत्स्यराष्ट्रं हनिष्यामो ग्रहिष्यामश्च गोधनम्| गृहीते गोधने नूनं तेऽपि योत्स्यन्ति पाण्डवाः | अपूर्णे समय चापि यदि पश्येम पाण्डवान्|| द्वादशान्यानि वर्षाणि प्रवेक्ष्यन्ति पुनर्वनम्| तस्मादन्यतरेणापि लाभोऽस्माकं भविष्यति || कोषवृद्धिर्हि अस्माकं शत्रूणां निधनं भवेत्| कथं सुयोधनं गच्छेद्युधिष्ठिरमुखाः पुरा || एतच्चापि वदत्येष मात्स्यः परिभवार्थि | तस्मात्कर्तव्यमेतद्धि तत्र यात्रा विधीयताम्| एतन्मनुगतं मन्येऽहं सर्वेषां यदि रोचते |'.

Trigarta king *Susharma* endorses *Duryodhana's* observation pointing out that *Virata* has always been inimical to him, besides now his powerful minister *Keechaka* is killed and therefore, would be easier to conquer their country. *Karna* agrees suggesting; however that approval of the *Kuru* elders should be taken before they commence the raid. If *Virata* is defeated and captured then *Pandavas* would fall in their trap, being without army and strength, though it is not sure whether they have hidden themselves in *Matsya desha* or they are all dead 'सम्मन्त्र्य चाशु गच्छाम साधनाय महीपते | किं च नः पाण्डवैः कार्यं हीनार्थबलपौरुषैः || अत्यन्तं वा प्रणष्टास्ते प्राप्ता वापि यमक्षयम्| यामो राजन् निरुद्विग्ना विराटनगरं वयम्||'. *Duryodhana* agrees with *Karna* and deputes *Dushasana* to take the approval of *Dhritarashtra* and others. It is agreed that *Susharma* should lead the attack with *Kauarava* following thereafter.

The thirteenth year of *Pandavas's* exile had by that time just completed, even as *Susharma* was making onslaught driving away *Virata's* cattle. After fierce battle *Susharma* succeeds in taking *Virata* a prisoner. *Yudhishthira* becomes concerned and tells *Bhima* that they should get the king released, 'तेषु संत्रस्यमानेषु कुन्तीपुत्रो युधिष्ठिरः | प्रत्यभाषन्महाबाहुं भीमसेनमरिन्दमम्|| मत्स्यराज परामृष्टस्त्रिगर्तेन सुशर्मणा | तं मोचय महाबाहो न गच्छेदद्विषतां वशम्||' since it is not proper for them to stand aloof when the king, under whom they have taken shelter 'उषिताः स्म सुखं सर्वे सर्वकामैः सुपूजिताः | भीमसेन त्वया कार्या तस्य वासस्य निष्कृतिः||'. But when *Yudhishthira* saw *Bhima* becoming enthusiastic was eye a huge tree to be uprooted as a weapon to fight, he cautions him not to perform extra-ordinary deeds, thereby exposing himself to *Kauravas* 'मा भीम साहसं कार्षीस्तिष्ठत्वेष वनस्पतिः | मा त्वां वृक्षेण कर्माणि कुर्वाणमतिमानुषम्|| जनाः समवबुध्येरन्भीमोऽयमिति भारत | अन्यदेवायुधं किंचित्प्रतिपद्यस्व मानुषम्||'. You all three should get *Virata*

released. In the fierce battle *Bhima* chases *Susharma* calling him to stop and when *Susharma* turns back wondering at the booming voice and see some one ferocious like death itself, concluding that a ferocious battle would soon ensue 'सुपर्मा विन्तयामास कालान्तकयमोपमम्। निष्ट निर्ष्किनि भापन्नं पृष्टतो रथपुङगवः | पश्यता सुमहत्कर्म महद्युद्धमुपर्थिनम्||'. In the battle *Shusharama* is defeated with hands and feet bound and brought before *Yudhishthira*, who, however, pardons him warning not to embark on such foolish expeditions.

Seeing the superhuman performance of all the *Pandavas* without recognizing their identity was surprised *Virata* honours them with wealth and rewards, thanking them for delivering from enemy's hands and declaring them they have by this act become the rulers of *Madhyadesha.* Due to their assistance, he has been fortunate to be alive, seeing his family and kingdom again 'युष्माकं विक्रमादद्य मुक्तोऽयं स्वस्निमानिह | नस्मात्भवन्तो मत्स्यानामीश्वराः सर्व एव हि || त्वत्कृपे ह्यद्य पश्यामि राज्यं संतानमेव च | यतश्च जातसम्भवो न च शत्रुवशं गतः ||'. Seeing him thus implore, *Yudhishthira* respectfully tell him that it is good nature that makes him respond in this manner 'प्रतिनन्दामि ते वाक्यं मनोज्ञं मत्स भापसे || आनृशंस्यपरो नित्यं सुसुखी सततं भव ||'. But *Virata* rejecting his pleadings declares, *Kanaka* from this day he would be honoured as king for *Matsyadesha* and also offer any thing else that he desires. But *Yudhishthira* still declines the offer.

When *Virata* was fighting with *Susharma* was getting his cows released form him, *Kauravas* independently arrived with a huge army and raided to seize the cows from *Matsyadesha*. Since *Virata* was absent the frightened cowherds reports this matter to the prince *Bhuminjaya.* At that time he was sitting in the inner chamber of the ladies. He told the cowherd that he surely is courageous and his bow is also strong therefore will defeat the *Kauarvas* putting fear in the hearts of all their powerful warriors - 'वित्रासियात्वा सगामे दानवाविव वज्रभृत्। आनेनैव महूर्तेन पुनः पत्यानयं पशून्||'. How can he intervene when he cannot be where *Kauravas* are seizing the cows. Let them all come and he will fight so courageously that they will wonder whether *Arjuna* himself is fighting come before them 'शून्यमासाद्य कुरवः प्रयान्त्यादाय गोधनम्। किं नु शक्यं मय कर्तुं यदहं तत्र नाभवम्|| पश्येयुरद्य मे वीर्यं कुरयस्ते समागताः | किं नर पार्थोऽर्जुनः साक्षादयमस्मान्प्रवाधते ||'. But he has no skillful charioteer, therefore, go in search for one and report back to him - 'अद्याहमनुगच्छेयं दृढधन्वा गवां पदम्। यदि मे सारथिः कश्चिद्भवेदश्वेपु कोविदः || तं त्वहं नावगच्छामि यो मे यन्ता भवेन्नरः | पश्यध्वं सारथिं क्षिप्रं मम युक्तं प्रयास्यतः ||'.

Listening to these words spoken by *Bhuminjaya, Brihannala (Arjuna)* realizing that the period of their exile is coming to close, prompts *Sairandhri* (*Draupadi*) to make the prince take him as his charioteer, telling him that he has been a able charioteer for *Arjuna* 'अयं वै पाण्डवस्यासीत्सारथिः सम्मतो दृढः वृहन्नलेति विख्यातः पार्थस्यासीत्सारथिः |'. *Sairandhri* also become angry that *Bhuminjaya* is comparing himself with Arjuna tells him that *Brihannala* was once the charioteer for *Arjuna* and he is not less qualified 'योऽसौ वृहद्वारणभो युवा सुप्रियदर्शनः | वृहन्नलेति विख्यातः पार्थस्यासीत्स सारथिः || धनुष्यनवरश्चासीत्तस्य शिष्यो महात्मनः |'.

When with much reluctance and persuasion, *Bhuminjaya* goes to the battle field, seeing the huge army manned by *Kauravas,* the prince becomes frightened saying that they cannot be defeated even by gods and therefore implores *Arjuna* to withdraw from the battle - 'तदनीकं महद्दृष्ट्वा गजाश्वरथसंकुलम्। कर्ण दुर्योधनकृपैर्गुप्तं शान्तनवेन च || द्रोणेन च सपुत्रेण महेश्वासेन धीमता | हृष्टरोमा भयोद्विग्नः पार्थं वैराटिरब्रवीत्|| नोत्सहे कुरुभिर्योद्धुं रोमहर्षं हि पश्य मे | वहुवीरमत्युग्रं देवैरपि दुरासदम्||'. Saying thus *Bhuminjaya* jumps down from the chariot frightened and running followed by one who looks like a eunuch, shouting 'नैप शूरैः स्मृतो धर्मः क्षत्रियस्य पलयनम्। श्रेयस्तु मरणं युद्धे न भीतस्य पलायनम्||'.Even as the soldiers start laughing, *Kauravas* wonder about a him who has bearing of a man but looks strange appearing somewhat like a man and somewhat like a woman. But his appearance is like *Arjuna* and also his gait, perhaps he is none other than *Arjuna* himself. Who else can be bold to come before us to fight - 'क एप वेपसंच्छन्नो भस्मनेव हुताशनः | किंचिदस्य यथा पुंसः किंचिदस्य यथा स्त्रीयः || सरूप्यस्मनुर्जनस्येव क्लीबरूपं विभर्ति च | तदेवैतच्छिरो ग्रीवं तौ वाहू परिघोपमौ | तद्वदेवास्य विक्रान्तं नायमन्यो धनंजयात्|... एकः कोऽस्मानुपायादन्यो लोके धनंजयात्||'.

Seeing him thus loose his courage, *Arjuna* tries to instill courage in the frightened prince, telling him if he now withdraws he will lose face in *Matsyadesha.* Therefore, *Arjuna* tells him that if he has no courage to fight himself, then he himself will fight on his behalf, the prince becoming his charioteer 'मा भैस्त्वं राजपुत्राग्य क्षत्रियोऽसि परंतप | कथं पुरुषशार्दूल शत्रुमध्ये विषीदसि || अहं वै कुरुभिर्योत्स्ये विजेष्यामि च ते पशून्।

प्रविश्यैनदरथानीकमपधृष्यं दुरासदम्|| यन्ता भव नरश्रेष्ठ योत्स्येऽहं कुरुभिः सह ||'.

Thereafter, as *Arjuna* was taking *Bhuminjaya* along with him to the place where he had concealed his *Gandeeva* bow and other arms, *Bhishma*, *Drona* and others became concerned suspecting the one who appears as eunuch to be no one other than *Arjuna* dressed in that fashion, 'एषंङ्गनाम्वेषधरः किरीटी जित्वाव यं नेष्यति चाद्य गा वः || य एषां पार्थो विक्रान्तः सव्यसाचीपरंतप | नायुद्धेन निवर्तेत सर्वैरपि मुरासुरैः ||'. Hearing these words, *Karna* grumbles with *Drona* saying that he always prays *Arjuna's* greatness whereas he is not even one sixteenth measure compared to *Duryodhana* and himself 'सदाभवान्फाल्गुनस्य गुणैरस्मान्विकत्थसे | न चार्जुनः कलापूर्णो मम दुर्योधनस्य च ||'. *Duryodhana* expresses joy saying if he is really *Arjuna* then his task is fulfilled having recognized him and *Pandavas* having to again in exile for twelve years and if he be a eunuch having likeness with *Arjuna* then he will surely kill him.

Here on reaching the great tree, *Arjuna* asks *Bhuminjaya* to climb the tree and bring out the bow which was concealed in the hollow of the tree. Seeing many other weapons stored therein, the prince *becomes* surprised and asks him to enlighten on that point. Seeing that the prince would not otherwise be comforted, *Arjuna* reveals his identity saying, 'अहमस्म्यर्जुनः पार्थः सभास्तारो युधिष्ठिरः | बल्लवो भीमसेनस्तु पितुस्ते रसपाचकः || अश्ववन्धोऽथ नकुलः सहदेवस्तु गोकुले | सैरन्ध्री द्रौपदीं विद्धि यत्कृते किचका हताः ||'. To remain *in cognito* they had concealed their weapons before they entered *Matsya desha* and employed by his father. *Arjuna* clarifies that he was obliged to behave impersonating like a eunuch, though not a eunuch, because of *Urvashi's* curse live in the company of women, singing and dancing. Now that the year of the curse and their exile is coming close, he would not be required to impersonate any longer, 'भार्तुर्नियोगाज्ज्येष्ठस्य संवत्सरमिदं व्रतम्| चरामि व्रतचर्यं च सत्यमेतद् ब्रवीमि ते || नास्मि क्लीबोमहाबाहो परवान्धर्मसंयुतः | समाप्तव्रतमुत्तीर्णं विद्धि मां त्वं नृपात्मज ||'. Hearing *Arjuna* revealing his identity, the prince becomes overwhelmed exclaiming 'दिष्ट्या त्वा पार्थ पश्यामि स्वागत ते धनंजय | लोहिताक्ष महाबाहो नागराजकरोपमम्||' *Arjuna* too pleased that he is no more with fear responds that he should see him fight with *Kauaravas* and the cows released from the captivity, 'प्रीतोऽस्मि पुरुषव्याघ्र न भयं विद्यते तव | सर्वानानुदामि ते शत्रून्रणे रणविशारद || स्वस्थो भव महाबाहो श्रिय मां शत्रुभिः सह |.. अहं वै कुरुभयोत्स्यान्यवजेष्यामि ते पशून्||'.

When *Bhuminjaya* asks how did become a eunuch, when his every limb is perfectly balanced, resembling like trident holding *Shiva* in the form of a eunuch or like a *gandhrva* or like *Indra* himself 'एवं युक्ताङ्गरूपस्य लक्षणैः सूचितस्य च | केन कर्मविपाकेन क्लीबत्वमिदमागतम्|| मन्ये त्वा क्लीबवर्षेण चरन्त शूलपाणिनम्| गन्धर्वराजप्रतिम देवं वापि शतक्रतुम्||'. *Arjuna* again explains that the year having come to close, he would no more be required to impersonate as eunuch, having lived like a eunuch in fulfillment of *Ursvashi's* curse. But he is not a eunuch though behaved like one. Therefore, having completed the year he is released from the curse 'भार्तुर्नियोगाज्ज्येष्ठस्य संवत्सरमिदं व्रतम्| चरामि व्रतचर्यं च सत्यमेतद्ब्रवीमि ते || नास्मि क्लीबो महाभावो परवान्धर्मसंयुतः | समाप्तव्रतमुत्तीर्णं विद्धि मा त्व नृपात्मज ||'. Whereupon *Bhuminjaya* gives a sigh of relied for having received the clarification saying further that surely no one having such noble marks could ever be a eunuch, though such suspicion arose in his mind 'परमोऽनुग्रहो मेऽद्य यरस्तर्को न मे वृथा | न कीदृशाः क्लीबरूपा भवन्ति तु नरोत्तम ||'.

Bhuminjaya having been thus assured of the assistance of such a great warrior tells *Arjuna* to consider him as suitable to be instructed as *Daruka* is to *Krishna*, or *Matali* is to *Indra* - 'दारुको वासुदेवस्य यथा शक्रस्य मातुलिः | तथा मां विद्धि सारथ्यां शिक्षितं नरर्पङ्गव ||'. Then with the divine bow retrieved, *Arjuna* takes the prince back to battle field, sound of the *Gandeeva*, the conch and the chariot making the earth tremble, 'शशाङ्कम्प विभत्सुः पार्थापयदरिंदमः | शङ्खशब्दोऽस्य सोऽत्यर्थं श्रूयते कालमेघवत्|| तस्य शङ्खस्य शब्देन धनुषो निस्वनेन च | वानरस्य च नादेन रथस्य स्वनेन च || जङ्गमस्य भयं घोरमकरोत्पाकशासनिः |'. Seeing these signs, *Drona* foresees bad times for *Kauaravas* saying that the warrior proceeding towards them could no one else be than *Arjuna*, 'यथा रथस्य निर्घोषो यथा मेघ उदीर्यते | कम्पते च यथा भूमिर्नैषोऽन्यः सव्यसाचिनः ||'. *Karna*, however, advises *Duryodhana* not to listen to *Drona* because he bears affection for *Arjuna* and is always speaking his praises Therefore, before the soldiers become concerned and uneasy lead them to fight *Virata's* soldiers 'जानाति हि मत नेपामनस्त्रासमयनीह नः | अर्जुने चास्य सम्प्रीतिमधिकामुपलक्षये || तथा हि दृष्ट्वा बीभत्सुमपायान्तं पशंसति | यथा सेना न भज्येत तथा नीतिर्विधीयताम्||'. But *Karna's* response was typical of his nature, remarking that such natural events are common to be seen, what have they to do with *Arjuna*, 'सदा च वायवो

वान्ति नित्यं वर्यंति वासवः | स्तनयित्वोश्च निर्घोषः श्रूयते बहुशस्तथा || किमर्थ कार्यं पार्थस्य कथं वा स प्रशस्यसे | अन्यत्र कामाद्द्वेषाद्वा रोषादस्मासु केवलात्||'. Therefore, he suggests that either they go back to *Hastinapur* with the cattle alone or stay here and see his valour in defeating the enemy 'कामं गच्छन्तु कुरवो धनमादाय केवलम्| रथेषु वापि तिष्ठन्तो युद्धं पश्यन्तु मामकम्||'.

Kripa takes objection to *Karna's* arrogant words saying that his words are ever couched in cruelty and neither take into consider the seriousness of the task nor think of the consequences 'सदैव तव राधेय युद्धे क्रूरतरा मतिः | नार्थानां प्रकृतिं वेत्सि नानुबन्धमवेक्षसे ||' and reminds him of all the great deeds accomplished by *Arjuna*. Therefore, he cautions him not to venture to engage Arjuna alone instead of all fighting together. *Ashvatthama* also berates him saying they have only captured the cattle and have not crossed over the boundaries of *Virata's* kingdom. It is unwise to speak thus when they are far from *Hastinapur* 'न च तावज्जीता गावो न च सीमान्तरं गताः | न हस्तिनापुरं प्राप्तस्त्वं च कर्ण विकत्थसे ||'. He therefore, recommends that they should fight with *Arjuna* with the same enthusiasm with which they played the game of dice with them. Let *Shakuni* also come here and fight. *Gandeev* does not throw wooden dice, it throws ferocious arrows. Even as *Shakuni* helped you in the game of dice, even so let him come and now fight *Arjuna* on the battle field. But *Ashvatthama* himself refused to take part in fighting him saying that he has not come here to fight *Arjuna* but the *Virata* 'यथा त्वमकरोर्द्यूतमिन्द्रप्रस्थं यथाऽहरः | तथाऽनैषीः सभां कृष्णां तथा युध्यस्व पाण्डवम्||... नाक्षान् क्षिपति गाण्डीवं न कृतं द्वापरं न च | ज्वलतो निशितान्बाणांस्तीक्ष्णान्क्षिपति गाण्डीवम्||... अन्तकः पवनो मृत्युस्तथाग्निर्वडवामुखः | कुर्युरेते क्वचिच्छेषं न तु क्रुद्धो धनंजयः || यथा सभायां द्यूतं त्व मातुलेन सहाकरोः | तथा युध्यस्व संग्रामे सौबलेन सुरक्षितः ||'. Then he clearly tells his intention that he has come here to fight with *Virata* and no with *Arjuna*. Therefore he will not participate in the fight even if others do 'युध्यन्ता कामतो योधा नाहं योत्स्ये धनंजयम्| मत्स्यो ह्यस्माभिरायोध्योयद्यागच्छेद्गवां पदम्||'.

Bhishma advises *Duryodhana* that *Drona*, *Kripa* and others speak what is beneficial for him. Therefore, he should not disregard the preceptor's advice. In fact he himself believed that this is not the time or place to settle internal disagreements and engage in battles, pointing out that *Karna* perhaps spoke only to enthuse and encourage him. *Ashvatthama* also defends his father that his praise for *Arjuna* was in remembering the old times and was not to create dissentions. Then *Duryodhana* asks *Drona* to pardon him requesting to clarify whether their exile is truly ended. *Bhishma* replies that in fact twelve more days have already elapsed. Since they have fulfilled their promise it would be advisable for *Duryodhana* even at this stage to come to terms with *Pandavas* saying if *Arjuna* can be bold to fight *Kauravas* single handed, what is there to prevent all the brothers to come together 'एकोऽपि समरे पार्थः पृथिवीं निर्दहेच्छरैः | भातृभिः सहितस्तान किं पुनः कौरवान्रणे | तस्मात्सन्धिं कुरुश्रेष्ठ कुरुष्व यदि मन्यसे ||'. But *Duryodhana* is not inclined to agree with his grandfather and tells him that he is not ready to give them their share, therefore, he should be ready for the battle 'नाहं राज्यं प्रदास्यामि पाण्डवानां पितामह | युद्धोपाचारिकं यत्तु तच्छीघ्रं प्रविधीयताम्||'.

What comes thereafter is a great battle in which *Kauravas* come to be routed, tremor and fear passing through their ranks, *Arjuna's Gandeeva*, the resonance of his conch and clamor of his chariot making the frightened cattle run with their tails lifted, 'तस्य शङ्खस्य शब्देन रथनेमिस्वनेन च | गाण्डीवस्य च घोषेण पृथिवी समकम्पत || अमानुषाणां भूतानां तेषां च ध्वजवासिनाम्| ऊर्ध्वं पुच्छान्विधुन्वाना रेभमाणाः समन्ततः | गावः प्रतिन्यवर्तन्त दिशमास्थाय दक्षिणाम्||'. In the battle *Vikarna* is defeated and *Karna* himself runs from the battlefield. Then *Arjuna* directs his chariot to the place where *Drona* his teacher was stationed, deciding to raise his weapon only if his teacher shoots first. But when the battle finally commences Drona and *Kripa* depart from the field unable to bear the intensity of *Arjuna's* offensive. With all being defeated one after the other, the battle come to end. Seeing the extra-ordinary valour displays by *Arjuna*, *Bhuminjaya* stands transfixed. When they were returning to the capital, he is told not to reveal the secret about *Pandavas* but instead take the credit himself for the success. *Brihannala* replies that no one would accept his words seeing the great army which was defeated, impossible for any human being. Instead he will remain quiet if people attribute the success to him and divulge only when he is permitted to do so.

Here in *Matsyadesha* when *Virata* comes to know that prince *Bhuminjaya* has gone alone to fight *Kauravas* accompanied by *Brihannala*, when he was away to fight *Susharma*, he becomes

exceedingly angry. Knowing that his son is but a child before the might of the *Kauravas*, he sends his army to find out his well being. But *Kanka* advises that so long as *Brihannala* is his charioteer, there is nothing to be worried and he will surely come back safe and sound. Even as *Kanka* was completing his words, a messenger came with the good news that the prince is on his way back with cattle having won the battle. Hearing the news *Kanka* again repeats that it is fortunate that the Prince has defeated *Kauravas;* success being with those whose charioteer is *Brihannala*, for even *Krishna's* charioteer *Daruka* is not equal to *Brihannala. Virata* thrilled with news of his son defeating *Kauravas* overlooks his remarks, sending emissaries to bring the prince back to the capital.

Flushed with pleasure *Virata* commands *Sairandhri* to bring the dice board, to play with *Kanka,* who cautions that one should not play the game when one is extremely happy. He refuses to play unless commanded, remembering his own earlier sufferings. Unmindful of what *Kanka* spoke, *Virata* repeats that his son has defeated *Kauravas*, only for *Kanka* to respond, how can he be defeated when *Brihannala* was with him - 'बृहन्नला यस्य यन्ता कथं स न जयेद्युधि |'. Hearing these repeated comparison of his son with a eunuch, *Virata* warns *Kanka* not to repeat the words again if he wishes to remain alive 'मम पुत्रेण मे षण्ढं ब्रह्मबन्धो प्रशंससि || वाच्यावाच्यं न जानीषे नूनं मामवमन्यसे |..नेदृशं नु पुनर्वाच्य यदि जीवितुमिच्छसि ||'. When *Kanka* repeats that who else but *Brihannala* could have defeated *Bhishma, Drona* and others 'यत्र द्रोणस्तथा भीष्मो द्रौणिर्वैकर्तनः कृपः | दुर्योधनश्च राजेन्द्रस्तथान्ये च महारथाः ||..कोऽन्यो बृहन्नलायास्तान्प्रतियुध्येत सङ्गतान्||'. *Virata* looses control over his patience and strikes *Yudhishthira* with the dice board. Blood starts flowing from his head, seeing which *Kanka* signals *Sairandhri,* standing nearby to rush and to hold the blood in her palm and not allow it to spill on the ground.

At that moment, hearing the arrival of the prince, *Virata* rushes to embrace him. As he enters, *Bhuminjaya* sees blood flowing from *Kanka's* head and knowing his real identity, when *Virata* informs him that it was his impudence in praising *Brihannala* when the victory was his son's. hearing this. Seeing this, *Bhuminjaya* concedes that the victory was not his but of some *divine person* who came to his assistance, 'न मया निर्जिता गावो न मया निर्जिताः परे | कृतं तत्सकलं तेन देवपुत्रेण केनचित्|| स हि भीतं द्रवन्तं मां देवपुत्रो न्यवर्तयत् | स चातिष्ठद्रथोपस्थे वज्रसंहननो युवा || तेन ता निर्जिता गावः कुरवश्च पराजिताः | तस्य तत्कर्म वीरस्य न मया तात तत्कृतम्||'. *Virata* wonders who could the *divine person* be and tells him that he would like to meet him. Bound by his promise *Bhuminjaya* gives an excuse that he vanished then but would soon reveal himself to all. *Virata* could not recognize *Arjuna* standing nearby dressed as eunuch as the *divine person* who came to his son's assistance.

The one year for remaining concealed having come to an end, *Pandavas* decide to reveal their identity to *Virata*. When *Virata* enters the assembly hall, he sees *Yudhishthira* occupying the seat reserved for kings and is surprised and shocked by his audacious behaviour. Seeing *Kanka* appointed as his companion to play game of dice occupying the seat meant for kings he asks for explanation, when *Brihannala* smilingly introduces him as the embodiment of righteousness, powerful among the powerful, courageous among the courageous, supreme among the wise ones and supreme in austerities, 'एष विग्रहवान् धर्म एष वीर्यवतां वरः | एष बुद्ध्याधिको लोके तपसा च परायणम्|| एषोऽस्त्रं विविधं वेत्ति त्रैलोक्ये सचराचरे | न चैवान्यः पुमान्वेत्ति न वेत्स्यति कदाचन ||. He is *Dharmaraja Yudhishthira*, senior among *Kurus*, whose renown is spread in the four quarters and is luminous as the Sun illuminating the whole world - ''दीर्घदर्शी महातेजाः पौरजानपदप्रियः | पाण्डवानामतिरथो यज्ञधर्मपरो वशी ||... अयं कुरूणामृषभो धर्मराजो युधिष्ठिरः | अस्य कीर्तिः स्थिता लोके सूर्यस्येवोद्यतः प्रभा || संसरन्ति दिशः सर्वा यशसोऽस्य गभस्तयः | उदितस्येव सूर्यस्य तेजसोऽनु गभस्तयः ||'.

A surprised and confused *Virata* wonders that if he be *Yudhisthira* then where could be his brothers and the noble *Draupadi*. It was heard that when they lost the game of dice and went in exile, their whereabouts are not known 'यद्येष राजा कौरव्यः कुन्तीपुत्रो युधिष्ठिरः | कतमोऽस्यार्जुनो भ्राता भीमश्च कतमो बली || नकुलः सहदेवो वा द्रौपदी वा यशस्विनी | यदा द्यूतजिताः पार्था न प्राज्ञायन्त ते क्वचित्||'. *Arjuna* then comes forward and introduces one by one of his brothers pointing - 'य एषो बल्लवो ब्रूते सूदस्तव नराधिप | एष भीमो महाराज भीमवेगपराक्रमः ||..अर्जुनोऽहं महाराज व्यक्तं ते श्रोत्रमागतः |

भीमादवरजः पार्थो यमाभ्यां चापि पूर्वजः ||..राज्ञः समीपे पुरुषोत्तमौ तु यमाविमौ विष्णुमहेन्द्रकल्पौ | मनुष्यलोके सकले समोऽस्ति ययोर्न रूपे न बले न शीले || आभ्यां तु पार्श्वे कनकोत्तमाङ्गी यैषा प्रभा मूर्तिमतीव गौरी | नीलोत्पला भा सुरदेवतेव कृष्णा स्थिता मूर्तिमतीव लक्ष्मीः ||' Thus introduced, prince *Bhuminjaya* pointing out to *Brihannala,* informs his father that this, indeed, is *the divine person*, who defeated *Kauravas* and released our cattle from their control 'अयं स द्विपतां हन्ता मृगाणामिव केसरी | अचरद्रथवृन्देषु निघ्नंस्तांस्तान्वरान्रथान्||'.

An extremely pleased and embarrassed, *Virata* then becoming humble tells his son that the time has now come to honour them and please them, if he approves offering his sister *Uttara* to *Arjuna* in marriage 'प्रसादनं पाण्डवस्य प्राप्तकालं हि रोचते | उत्तरां च प्रयच्छामि पार्थाय यदि मन्यसे ||' then requests *Yudhishthira* to pardon if he has spoken any unpleasant words earlier 'यदस्माभिरजानाद्भिः किंचिदुक्तो नराधिपः | क्षन्तुमर्हति तत्सर्वं धर्मात्मा ह्येष पाण्डवः ||'.Thereafter in consultation with his son he presented all the marks of royalty over *Matsya desh* to *Yudhishthira*, saying they all indeed are fortunate. *Virata* was senior in age and seeing *Pandavas* was so overwhelmed that he embraced as though they were his own sons, saying it is indeed fortunate that they have all returned safely from their exile and completed the year concealed from the evil *Duryodhana.* Then he requests to receive *Uttara* his daughter married to *Arjuna* 'राज्यं च सर्वं विससर्ज तस्मै सदण्डकोशं सपुरं महात्मा || पाण्डवांश्च ततः सर्वान्मत्स्यराजः प्रतापवान्| धनंजयं पुरस्कृत्य दिष्ट्या दिष्ट्येति चाब्रवीत्||...दिष्ट्या भवन्तः सम्प्राप्ताः सर्वे कुशलिनो वनात्| दिष्ट्या सम्पालितं कृच्छ्रमज्ञातं वै दुरात्मभिः || उत्तरां प्रतिगृह्णातु सव्यसाची धनंजयः | अयं ह्यौपयिको भर्ता तस्याः पुरुषसत्तम ||'.

Hearing his request, *Arjuna* refuses to accept *Uttara* as his wife protesting that she has been a young girl come of age during the period when she was a student being trained by him, and if he marries her then people will speak ill and most improper. During all the time when he impersonated as *Brihannala*, the eunuch he has remained pure, with his senses restrained treating her as a disciple and a daughter. Therefore he will instead accept her as a bride for his son *Aabhimanyu*, who is *Krishna's* sister *Subhadra's* son 'अन्तःपुरेऽहमुषितः सदा पश्यन्सुतां तव | रहस्यं च प्रकाशं च विश्वस्ता पितृवन्मयि || प्रियो बहुतश्चासं नर्तको गीतकोविदः | आचार्यवच्च मां नित्यं मन्यते दुहिता तव || वयस्थया तया राजन्सह संवत्सरोषितः | अतिशङ्का भवेत्स्थाने तव लोकस्य वा विभो || तस्मान्निमन्त्रयेऽहं ते दुहितां मनुजाधिप | शुद्धो जितेन्द्रियो दान्तस्तस्याः शुद्धिः कृता मया || अहं ते दुहितां मनुजाधिप | शुद्धो जितेन्द्रियो दान्तस्तस्याः शुद्धिः कृता मया ||'.

Extremely pleased with the suggestion, *Virata* give *Uttara* in marriage with *Abhimanyu*, with grandeur and great pomp, in which *Krishna*, *Balarama* come with *Subhadra* come from far off *Dvaraka* to take participate. The new couple and *Pandavas* are showered with wealth by *Virata, Krishna* and *Balarama* making them rich and powerful as associates.

Krishna who had come to witness the marriage takes the opportunity to advise *Pandavas* that the time has come to stake their claim to their kingdom, now that their exile has come to an end and live in peace with *Kauravas* - 'पाण्डोः सुतैस्तद् व्रतमुग्ररूपं वर्षाणि षट्सप्त च चीर्णमग्र्यैः || . . एवंगते धर्मसुतस्य राज्ञो दुर्योधनस्यापि च यद्धितं स्यात्|| तच्चिन्तयध्वं कुरुपुङ्गवानां धर्म्यं च युक्तं च यशस्करं च | अधर्मयुक्तं न च कामयेत राज्यं सुराणामपि धर्मराजः || धर्मार्थयुक्तं तु महीपतित्वं ग्रामेऽपि कस्मिंश्चिदयं बुभूषेत् |'. *Krishna* admits that *Duryodhana* would not give *Pandavas* easily their possessions but he prefers negations to warfare. He hopes that good sense will prevail on *Kauravas. Balarama, Drupada* and *Virata* agree to his suggestion though *Satyaki* feels that disregarding *Bhishma* and other's advise should *Duryodhana* refuse to their suggestion, then they should be force them to part with 'अनुनीता हि भीष्मेण द्रोणेन विदुरेण च | न व्यवस्यन्ति पाण्डूनां प्रदातुं पैतृकं वसु || अहं तु तान्शितैर्बाणैरनुनीय रणे बलात्| पादयोः पातयिष्यामि कौन्तेयस्य महात्मनः ||'.

All agree with *Satyaki* that *Duryodhana* will not part easily with *Pandava's* share - 'न हि दुर्योधनो राज्यं मधुरेण प्रदास्यति || अनुवर्त्स्यति तं चापि धृतराष्ट्रः सुतप्रियः | भीष्मद्रोणौ च कार्पण्यान्मौर्ख्याद्राधेयसौबलौ || and decide to send to *Duryodhana* a messenger a wise *Brahmin* who is 'धर्मशीलः शुचिः कुलीनः पुरुषो प्रमत्तः दूतः समर्थः'. But this does not prevent them from keeping their armaments sharpened simultaneously when peace was being assiduously pursued, negotiated. The messenger is specially told to speak without anger in heart as a right but by way of request for fair treatment of *Pandavas* and if that friendly approaches is rejected then delay the negations further, doing every thing that would bring dissention between *Duryodhana* on the one side and *Bhisma*, *Drona* and *Kripa* on the other, so that in the man time *Pandavas* could gather alliances and strength - 'भवांस्तु धर्मसंयुक्तं धृतराष्ट्रं ब्रुवन्वचः || मनांसि तस्य योधानां ध्रुवमावर्तयिष्यति | विदुरश्चापि तद्वाक्यं साधयिष्यति तावकम्||

भीष्मद्रोणकृपादीनां भेदं संजनयिष्यति | अमात्येषु च भिन्नेषु योधेषु विमुखेषु च || .. एतास्मिन्नन्तरे पार्थाः सर्वमेकाग्रबुद्धयः || सेनाकर्म करिष्यन्ति द्रव्याणां चैव संचयम् | विद्यमानेषु च स्वेषु लम्बमाने तथा त्वयि | न तथा ते करिष्यन्ति सेनाकार्म संशयः ||'. Then assuring *Pandavas* their full support, *Krishna* and *Balarama* too return to *Dvaraka*.

Here *Duryodhana* did not allowing any grass to grow under his feet either rushing to meet *Krishna* the moment he with *Balarama* reached *Dvaraka.* When he reached, he finds *Krishna* asleep and proud of himself as representing a great Kingdom, sat on the seat near his head. *Arjuna* too followed thereafter but seeing *Duryodhana* already seated, respectfully stations himself near *Krishna's* feet. As a result, when *Krishna* opened his eyes, his sight fell on *Arjuna.* When he inquires the purpose of his visit, Duryodhana who was sitting near his head sheepishly tells him that he having come first he should be given the first preference to explain *the* purpose of his visit. *Krishna* smilingly replies to him he would hear *Arjuna* first since besides being the younger among the two, he saw him earlier.

Both tell him that they have come to seek his alliance when the war begins between them. *Krishna* reminds them that both are dear to him and *Balarama*, therefore, it becomes difficult one and not the other. He himself having decided not to participate in the war taking up arms he suggests them an alternative choice. Either choose the entire *Narayana* army of the *Yadavas* or him alone as an unarmed participant - 'मत्संहनननुल्यानां गोपानामर्बुदं महत्| नारायणा इति ख्याताः सर्वेसंग्रामयोधिनः || ते वा युधि दुराधर्षा भवन्त्वेकस्य सैनिकाः | अयुध्यमानः संग्रामे न्यस्तशस्त्रोऽहमेकतः ||'. *Arjuna,* to whom the first choice was given, replies *Krishna* that there is no question of choosing, since he cannot think of choosing any thing where *Krishna* is not there. Therefore his choice is *Krishna* as an unarmed participant. *Duryodhana* heaves a sigh of relief seeing *Arjuna's* choice declaring that in that case he will have the whole *Narayana* army for the *Kauaravas* and goes to his preceptor for his help. But *Balarama* declines saying that he cannot keep him even for a moment separate from *Krishna*, therefore he has already conveyed *Krishna* that he will help neither *Arjuna* nor *Duryodhana*. Therefore depart with my blessing and fight like a true *Kshatriya* 'न चाहमुत्सहे कृष्ण विना स्थातुमपि क्षणम्|| नाहं सहाय पार्थस्य नापि दुर्योधनास्य वै | इति मे निश्चिता बुद्धिर्वासुदेवमवेक्ष्य ह | जातोऽसि युध्यस्व धर्मेण क्षात्रेण पुरुषर्षभ ||'. Pleased with getting support of the powerful battalions, *Duryodhana* goes back to *Hastinapura* with that happy news.

The moment *Duryodhana* leaves, *Krishna* pointedly asks *Arjuna* why he chose him and not the *Narayana* army. *Arjuna's* reply too *was* significant. He replies that though *Krishna* is capable of defeating *Kauravas* singly, which he himself could easily have done, he preferred to have him on his side, since it is known very well in all the three worlds that success follows wherever *Krishna* goes. Therefore it is his desire that *Krishna* should lead him to success performing as his charioteer - 'भवान्समर्थ स्तान्निहन्तुं नात्रसंशयः | निहन्तुमहमप्येकः समर्थः पुरुषोत्तम || भवांस्तु कीर्तिमाल्लोके तद्यशस्त्वा गमिष्यति | यशसा चाहमप्यर्थी तस्मादसि मया वृतः || सारथ्य तु त्वया कार्यमिति मे मानसं सदा | चिररात्रेप्सितं कामं तद्भवान्कर्तुमर्हसि ||'. *Krishna* was happy to listen to his words but smiling chided him saying that he seems always to be competing with him in fulfilling the *divine intention* and *purpose* - 'अपपन्नमिदं पार्थ यत्स्पर्धसि मया सह | सारथ्यं करिष्यामि कामः सम्पद्यतां तव ||'.

Both sides begin their preparation promptly gathering their allies to come and support them. *Shalya*, maternal uncle of *Nakula* and *Sahadeva* receiving the message from *Yudhishthira* embarks on the journey to their help. But unknown to him or the *Pandavas*, *Duryodhana* intercedes and arranges stealthily to offer him a great reception. Extremely gratified with the honour and hospitality *Shalya*, mistaking it to be on behalf of *Yudhishthira,* offers his unstinted support to the host. At that moment *Duryodhana* approaches and reveals to him that it was he who had honoured him in grand fashion and not *Yudhishthira*. An embarrassed *Shalya* is forced to side with him. Thereafter, he goes to *Yudhishthira* and tells him what had transpired. While *Yudhishthira* consoled him that whatever happened was *the divine will*, *Shalya* assures him that when *Karna* readies himself to fight Arjuna, at that time he will speak all words which are unpalatable to him and when he loses his confidence and valor then he will be easily killed - 'तस्याहं कुरुशार्दूल प्रतिपमहितं वचः | ध्रुवं संकथयिष्यामि योद्धुकामस्य संयुगे || यथा स्म हृतदर्पश्च हृततेजाश्च पाण्डव | भविष्यति सुखं हन्तुं सत्यमेतद्ब्रवीमि ||'.

Then *Shalya* consoles *Yudhishthira* that even gods had to suffer in the hands of *asuras*, till they

persisted in their endeavour and succeeded in the end. In the same manner you will also succeed and rule the worlds 'ततः सागरपर्यन्तां भोक्ष्यसे मेदिनीमिमाम | भ्रातृभिः सहितो वीर द्रौपद्या च सहानया ||'. Finally *Pandavas* requests *Shalya* since he will certainly be the charioteer for *Karna* he should make every attempt to discourage him by praising *Arjuna's* courage and valor. *Shalya* accordingly agrees to do so 'भवान्कर्णस्य सारथ्यं करिष्यति न संशयः | तत्र तेजोवधः कार्यः कर्णस्यार्जुनसंस्तव || एवमेतत्करिष्यामि यथा मां सम्प्रभाषसे | यच्चान्यादपि शक्ष्यामि तत्करिष्याम्यहं तव ||'.

Here in the meanwhile in *Hastinapura, Virata's* messenger arrives and makes forceful plea to *Dhritarashtra* to uphold धर्म, 'सर्वैर्भवद्भिर्विदितो राजधर्मः' impressing on him the desirability of giving to *Pandavas* what was deprived from them. He counsels him that *Pandavas* have already suffered and forgetting all their troubles would like to live in cordial circumstances with their cousins, 'तेसर्वं पृष्ठतः कृत्वा तत् सर्वं पूर्वकिल्बिषम्| सामहव कुरुभिः सार्धमिच्छन्ति कुरुपुङ्गवः ||'. They do not desire to take by force what is theirs, saying if that was their intention then they would have easily won the war being strong among the two - 'यश्चापि धार्त राष्ट्रस्य हेतुः स्याद्विग्रहं प्रति | स च हंतुर्न मन्तव्यो बलीयांसस्तथा हि ते ||'. *Bhisma* commends the wisdom contained in his suggestion remarking that it is fortunate that they are willing to negotiate for peace and embark on a war - 'दिष्ट्या सहायवन्तश्च दिष्ट्या धर्मे च ते रताः || दिष्ट्या च संधिकामास्ते भ्रातरः कुरुनन्दनाः | दिष्ट्या न युद्धमनसः पाण्डवाः सह बान्धवैः ||'.

Karna opposes the suggestion speaking audaciously what is the use of repeating what every one is aware all these days? No injustice has been done to *Pandavas* have been defeated in the game of dice, *Pandavas* having to go in exile. Therefore, there is no question of their having to be given their share nor that *Yudhishthira* having fulfilled his promise is asking for his share. He seems to have instigated by *Virata* and *Drupada* and *Duryodhana* is not obliged to give half nor even quarter of the kingdom to them, *righteousness* justifying that he should enjoy the whole kingdom alone 'न तत्रविदितं ब्रह्मॅल्लोके भूतेन केनचित्| पुनरुक्तेन किं तेन भाषितेन पुनः पुनः || दुर्योधनार्थे शकुनिर्द्यूते निर्जितवान्पुरा | समयेन गतोऽरण्यं पाण्डुपुत्रो युधिष्ठिरः || स तं समयमाश्रित्य राज्यं नेच्छति पैतृकम्| बलमाश्रित्य मत्स्यानां पञ्चालानां च मूर्खवत्|| दुर्योधनो भयाद्विद्वन्न दद्यात्पादमन्ततः | धर्मतस्तु महीं कृत्स्नां प्रदद्याच्छत्रवोऽपि च ||'.

Hearing these words *Bhishma* becomes irritated by his intrusion in family matters and reminds him not to forget their encounter with *Gandharvas* and how *Arjuna* saved them, his cottage having been displayed at that very occasion and if they do not consider the *Brahmin's* advice then he may to see all being mowed down by *Arjuna*, 'बहुशो जीयमानस्य कर्म दृष्टं तदैव ते | नचेदेवं करिष्यामो यदयं ब्राह्मणोऽब्रवीत्| ध्रुवं युधि हतास्तेन भक्षयिष्याम पांसुकान्||'. *Dhritarashtra* agrees with Bhishma's advice promising to send *Sanjaya,* acknowledging that many territories under his rule were actually won by *Pandavas*. Therefore, he should go to *Yudhishthira* respectfully and tell them they have completed the period of exile, even though it was not proper that they should have gone in exile, even then by other action, their mind has attained peace.

Then commending the righteous behaviour of the *Pandavas*, *Dhritarashtra* speaks of *Duryodhana* as one who is primarily aggressive having been born in agreeable circumstances and thinks it easy not to hand over their share to *Pandavas*. But he is of the opinion that it is profitable to give their share since he has stalwarts like *Arjuna*, *Bhima*, *Krishna*, *Satyaki* on their side - 'यस्यार्जुनः पदवीं केशवश्च वृकोदरः सात्यकोऽजनशत्रोः | माद्रीसुतौ सृंजयश्चापि यान्ति पुरा युद्धात्साधु तस्य प्रदानम्||.' They are capable of winning the whole world by their courage and strength, many able warriors having aligned with them. Though *Kaurava* army is strong and well equipped it will not be able to face them in battles. The one in whose forefront is *Krishna* no one can stand on their face. He concedes that his heart becomes uneasy hearing that *Krishna* and *Arjuna* would be sitting together on the same chariot. It would be propitious if his dull-witted son does not go to counter them in battle. He is fully aware that *Arjuna* is like *Indra* himself and *Krishna* is one like eternal *Vishnu*. But he is afraid not so much of *Arjuna, Bhima* or *Krishna* as he is with *Yudhishthira's* anger fortified by his penance 'न जातु ताञ्छत्रुरन्यः सहेत येषां स स्यादग्रणीर्वृष्णिसिंहः | प्रवेपते मे हृदयं भयेन श्रुत्वा कृष्णावेकरथे समेतौ ||..मतो हि मे शक्रसमो धनंजयः सनातनो वृष्णवीरश्च विष्णुः | धर्मरतो ह्रीनिषेवस्तरस्वी | कुन्तीपुत्रः पाण्डवोऽजनशत्रुः ||..नाहं तथा ह्यर्जुनाद्वासुदेवाद्भीमाद्वाहं यमयोर्वा बिभेमि || यथा राज्ञः क्रोधदीप्तस्य सूत मन्योरहं भीततरः सदैव | महातपा ब्रह्मचर्येण युक्तः संकल्पोऽयं मानसस्तस्य सिद्ध्येत्||'.

In spite of the sane moments, *Dhritarashtra* being shrewd and cunning in his own way, with his

mind influenced by self-interest and love for his son, was given to be influenced by his sons and family, sends *Sanjaya* to *Yudhishthira* with his own message, which is simple in words but couched in many significant implications, intended to weaken the resolve of the *Pandavas* to fight, so that the interest of his sons would be secure. His instructions to *Sanjaya* were clear. He should speak to them with respect and affection, as well of *Krishna*, reminding that *Dhritarashtra* is keen to have peaceful settlement with them, and they will not refuse *Krishna's* any advise 'अजनशत्रुं कुशलं स्म पृच्छेः पुनः पुनः प्रीतियुक्त वदंस्त्वम्| जनार्दनं चापि समेत्य तात महामात्रं वीर्यवतामुदारम्|| अनामयं मद्वचनेन पृच्छेर्धृतराष्ट्रःपाण्डवांः शान्तिमीप्सुः | न तस्य किंचिद्वचनं न कुर्यात्कुन्तीपुत्रो वासुदेवस्य सूत ||'. Inquire of the welfare of all those whom you see there and besides speak all those things which are beneficial for his family depending on the circumstances, but do not speak any words in the of those royal pedigree which will displease them and make them angry 'आनामयं मद्वचनेन पृच्छेः सर्वांस्तथा...यदयत्तत्र प्राप्तकाल परेभ्यस्त्वं मन्येथा भारतानां हितं च | तद्भाषेथाः संजय राजमध्ये नमूर्च्छयेदयन्न च युद्धहेतुः ||'.

As an ambassador, *Sanjaya* was incomparable being intelligent, resourceful, receptive and devoted to *Dhritarashtra* and knowing his would convey his views cleverly, diplomatically and effectively from whom *Kautilya* could have taken lessons. One needs to approach, read, study and ponder over carefully his contours when he communicated to *Pandavas*, as one would approach a mystery, an enigma recognizing how without skipping a single or sentence or nuance brief words could convey variety of emotions, yet remaining obscure, not one chooses to remain so. Even when the communication is concluded, one will wonder whether he has understood or if at all.

When *Sanjaya* comes to meet *Yudhishthira*, he finds him in the company of his brothers, *Krishna, Satyaki, Virata* and others sitting nearby. Offering them his respects, he offers good wishes from *Dhritarashtra* and the welfare of the elders, which *Yudhishthira* responds asking him about the welfare of all in *Hastinapur*. As instructed *Sanjaya* begins praising them for their enlightened and compassionate dealings telling him further that *Dhritarashtra* does not desire enmity but laments when unpleasant things spoken about his sons.

After the exchange of pleasantries he begins his diplomatic assignment, acknowledging on behalf of his master that *Dhritarashtra* laments within himself and does not allow his sons to despise *Pandavas*. They will in no circumstances would abandon righteousness for personal gain at the same accepting only course is reconciliation 'न चानुजानाति भृशं च तप्यते शोचत्यन्तः सविगंऽजातशत्रो | श्रुणोति हि ब्रम्हणानां समेत्य मित्रद्रोहः पातकेभ्यो गरीयान्|| ..न कामार्थं संत्यजेयुर्हि धर्मं पाण्डोःसुताः सर्वं एवंपन्द कल्पाः | त्वमेवैतत्पाज्ञयाजतशत्रो समाकुर्या येन शमाप्नुयुस्ते ||'. He praises them that born in noble family and lacking cruel attributes and inclination, charitable, righteous know the consequence of actions; they will never perform any mean act. Even if there exist any defect, then it will be seen like dark spot on a white cloth - 'न युज्यते कर्म युष्मासु हीनं सत्त्व हि वस्तादृशं भीमसेनाः | उद्भासते ह्यञ्जनबिन्दुवत्तच्छुभ्रे वस्त्रे यद्भवेत्किल्बिषं वः ||'. They who perform work for the welfare of the family, alone deserve to be called son, friend or a brother, and it would have been better if *Kauravas* too follow the same path - 'ते वै धन्या यैः कृतं ज्ञातिकार्यं ते वै पुत्राः सुहृदो बान्धवाश्च | उपकृष्टं जीवितं संत्यजेयुयतः कुरूणां नियतो वैभवः स्यात्||'. Therefore, if *Pandavas* punish, imprison or kill the *Kauaravas* as their enemies then their remaining live will not be commended as disciplined life but as good as death 'ते चेत्कुरूननुशास्य पार्था निर्णीय सर्वान् द्विषतो निगृह्य | सम वस्तज्जीवितं मृत्युना स्यादयज्जीवध्य ज्ञातिवधे न साधु ||'. When *Pandavas* have with them *Krishna, Dhrupad, Satyaki* and others on their side are capable of punishing *Kauravas*, 'को ह्येव युष्मान्सह केशवेन सचेकितानान्पार्षतबाहुगुप्तान्| ससात्यकीनविषहेत पजेतु लब्ध्वापि देवान् सचिवान्सहेन्द्रान् ||', at the same time it will also not be easy to defeat *Kauravas*, with *Bhishma, Drona, Karna* and other stalwarts fighting on their side - 'को वा कुरून्द्रोणभीष्माभिगुप्तानश्वत्थाम्ना शल्यकृपादिभिश्च | रणे विजेतुं विषहेत राजन्राधेयगुप्तान्सह भूमिपालैः ||' *Sanjaya* concluding that he does not see any good thing coming from success of the one defeat of the other side 'सोऽहं जयं चैव पराजयं च निःश्रेयसं नाधिगच्छामि किञ्चित्||'.

How can *Kunti's* sons behave like one born in immoral family, which will neither bring righteousness nor any prosperity. To *Krishna* and *Drupada*, *Sanjaya* would like to come to refuge and appeal to find out how a settlement could be brought between the cousins and not discard his plea. He

concedes that *Arjuna* would give even his life if asked, therefore, his efforts and those of *Dhritarashtra* should be seriously considered by them since *Dhritarashtra, Bhishma, Vidura, Drona* and all elders desire negotiated settlement - 'कथं हि नीचा इव दौष्कुलेया निर्धर्मार्थं कर्म कुर्युश्च पार्थाः | सोऽहं प्रसाद्य प्रणतो वासुदेवं पञ्चालानामधिपं चैव वृद्धम्|| कृताञ्जलिः शरणं वः प्रपद्ये कथं स्वस्ति स्यात्कुरुसृञ्जयानाम्| न ह्येवमेवं वचनं वासुदेवो धनंजयो वा जातु किंचिन्न कुर्यात्||'.

Yudhishthira observing that *Sanjaya* has not yet spelt the terms for giving *Pandavas* their share of kingdom, replies modestly that no one has ever heard him desiring war, 'कां नु वाचं संजय मे श्रृणोषि युद्धैषिणीं येन युद्धाद्बिभेषि | अयुद्धं वै तात युद्धाद्गरीयः कस्तल्लब्ध्वा जातु युध्येत सूत ||'. He agrees that it is preferable not to fight, never forgoing the opportunity to achieve the goal. If one cannot gets what one desires without fighting then who would fight? Attached to his son *Dhritarashtra* does not listen to *Vidura,* in truth all were progressing listening to his advise, they were not when they refused - 'क्षत्तुर्यदा नान्ववर्तन्त बुद्धिं कृच्छ्रं कुरून्सूत तदाभ्याजगाम | यावत्प्रज्ञामन्ववर्तन्त तस्य तावत्तेषां राष्ट्रवृद्धिर्बभूव ||'. Why should one grudge if one desires what one deserves? If it is shrewdness not to give *Pandavas,* then only battle on the battle field will solve all doubts. *Pandavas* have suffered enough, they should enjoy their share.

Sanjaya does not yet speak about sharing the kingdom, having other weapons in his sheath. Lauding *Yudhishthira* as the icon of righteousness, he pontificates that life is uncertain with many sufferings, therefore they should not consider war as an option, war being evil and contrary to their attributes and inclination. If *Kauravas* do not give them their share, then it would be preferable for them to go the land of *Andhakas* and *Vrishnis* and beg for their living instead of fighting a battle 'न चेद् भागं कुरवोऽन्यत्र युद्धात्प्रयच्छन्ते तुभ्यमजातशत्रो | भैक्षचर्यामन्धकवृष्णिराज्ये श्रेयो मन्ये न तु युद्धेन राज्यम्||'. Because one can perform righteous actions only if one is alive in life, not after death - 'अल्पकालं जीवितं यन्मनुष्ये महास्रावं नित्यदुःखं चलं च | भूयश्च तद्यशसो नानुरूपं तस्मात्पापं पाण्डव मा कृथास्त्वम् ||'. *Pandavas* have been performing actions which would bring hem happiness in heavens. Who would one perform actions that bring unhappiness and miseries? Compassion is their nature, not pleasure. How can they think death for *Bhishma* and *Drona,* against their true character. Aware of these things, they should not go to war and if they doing this as advised by their counselors, then they should hand over everything to them and depart for the forest because only that is preferable to the destruction of the family 'इह क्षेत्रे क्रियते पार्थ कार्यं न वै किञ्चित्क्रियते प्रेत्य कार्यम्| कृतं त्वया पारलौक्यं च कर्म पुण्यं महत्सद्भिरनुप्रशस्तम्||..पापानुबन्धं को नु तं कामयेत क्षमैव ते ज्यायसी नोत भोगाः | यत्र भीष्मः शान्तनवो हतः स्याद्यत्र द्रोणः सहपुत्रो हतः स्यात्||..लब्ध्वापीमां पृथिवीं सागरान्तां जरामृत्यू नैव हि त्वं प्रजह्याः | प्रियाप्रिये सुखदुःखे च राजन्नेवं विद्वान्नैव युद्धं कुरु त्वम्||'. *Yet there is no talk of giving Panduvas their share.*

Honest man even in his humility could be blunt and sharp in his replies. *Yudhishthira* was not exception. While agreeing with everything that *Sanjaya* spoke, he reminds him that in the final analysis righteousness alone remains supreme. Therefore, he ticks reminding when considering धर्म and अधर्म, often अधर्म takes the form of धर्म and धर्म appearing as अधर्म. Only a man of wisdom is able to distinguish between धर्म and अधर्म. Therefore, knowing that *Krishna* as dear to them upholds righteous actions, they can never transgress his words 'असंशयं संजय सत्यमेतद्धर्मो वरः कर्मणां यत्त्वमात्थ | ज्ञात्वा तु मां संजय गर्हयेस्त्वं यदि धर्मं यद्यधर्मं चरेयम्|| यत्राधर्मो धर्मरूपाणि धत्ते धर्मः कृत्स्नो दृश्यतेऽधर्मरूपः | बिभ्रद्धर्मो धर्मरूपं तथा च विद्वांसस्तं सम्प्रपश्यन्ति बुद्ध्या ||..ईदृशोऽयं केशवस्तात्विद्वान्विद्धि ह्येनं कर्मणां निश्चयज्ञम्| प्रियश्च नः साधुतमश्च कृष्णो नातिक्रमे वचनं केशवस्य ||'.

Krishna, who was sitting nearby sees through *Sanjaya's* deceitful talk and responds saying that even as he wants to save *Pandavas* from destruction, giving them wealth and happiness, even so he desires prosperity of *Kauravas* - 'अविनाशं संजय पाण्डवानामिच्छाम्यहं भूतिमेषां प्रियं च | तथा राज्ञो धृतराष्ट्रस्य सूत समाशंसे बहुपुत्रस्य वृद्धिम्|| कामो हि मे संजय नित्यमेव नान्यद्ब्रूयां तान्प्रति शाम्यतेति | राज्ञश्च हि प्रियमेतच्छृणोमि मन्ये चैतत्पाण्डवानां समक्षम्||. But if *Dhritarashtra* thinks that by preaching धर्म for *Pandavas*, he would succeed in preserving possessions and prosperity for his own sons, then that would lead one nowhere 'यस्मिन्गृद्धो धृतराष्ट्रः सपुत्रः कस्मादेषां कलहो नावमूर्च्छेत् || न त्वं धर्मं विचारं संजयेह मत्तश्च जानासि युधिष्ठिरश्च |. *Sanjaya* is fully aware that *Yudhishthira* and himself are fully conscious of धर्म and अधर्म and having acted accordingly ; of this he need have no doubts 'न त्वं धर्मं विचरं संजयेह मत्तश्च जानासि युधिष्ठिरश्च | अथो कस्मात्संजय पाण्डवस्य उत्साहिनः पूरयतः स्वकर्म ||'.

Then *Krishna* takes on *Sanjaya* sharply saying when he himself is considered in the three worlds as a man of wisdom and righteousness, how come he is engaged in spreading the web of deceitful talk for the sake of *Kauravas* ? *Yudhishthira* is ever engaged in wisdom and righteousness and will ever remain engaged in righteous deeds of this fact he should rest assured. If he considers that there is a way of getting their share without killing *Kauravas* that way should be communicated to them. Would keeping quiet be desirable in that case enlighten whether fighting one's battles according to *Kshatriya dharma* is desirable or leaving the battlefield without fighting. 'जानन्निमं सर्वलोकस्य धर्मं विप्रेन्द्राणां क्षत्रियाणां विशां च | स कस्मात्त्वं जानतां ज्ञानवान्सन् व्यायच्छसे संजय कौरवार्थे ||..उताहो त्वं मन्यसे शाम्यमेव राज्ञां युद्धप वर्तते धर्मतन्त्रम्| आयुद्धे वा वर्तते धर्मस्त्र तथैव ते वाच्यमिमा श्रुणोमि ||'.

Kauravas want to retain inheritance of the *Pandavas* un-righteously, not following the ancient राजधर्म, which is not proper. When *Draupadi* was humiliated *Bhishma* and others kept quiet. If they had restrained them at that time then that would be please *Krishna* as well done what was good for his sons. They were not restrained all keeping quiet and even *Vidura* who spoke of righteousness was castigated. It is surprising that overlooking the injustice perpetrated and all the humiliating incidents that took place in the *Kuru* assembly he should venture to advise principles of righteousness to *Yudhishthira. Sanjaya* is aware of all the things that happened, therefore, *Krishna* himself would like to go to *Hastinapur* for negotiations and settlement. *Pandavas* were ready to serve *Dhritarashtra* even when fighting for their rights. Therefore, let wise *Sanjaya* convey the message to the king that established in righteousness, *Pandavas* are ready for peaceful negations as well capable of fighting for their rights, therefore let him decide which course he wants to follow 'अधर्मज्ञैर्धीमबुध्यमानैः पादुर्भूतः संजय साधु तन्न ऽऽ तत्र राजा धृतराष्ट्रः सपुत्रो धर्म्य हरेत्पाण्डवानाम कस्मात्| नावेक्षन्ते राजधर्मं पुराणं तदन्वयाः कुरवः सर्व एव ||..प्रियां भार्यां द्रौपदीं पाण्डवानां यशस्विनीं शीलवृत्तोपपमम्| यदुपेक्षन्त कुरवो भीष्ममुख्याः कामानुवागेनोपरुद्धां व्रजन्तीम्|| ..न चेत्तदा ते सकुमारवृद्धा आवारयिष्यन्कुरवः समेताः | मम प्रिय धृतराष्ट्रोऽकरिष्यत्पुत्राणां च कृतमस्याभविष्यत्||...कार्पण्यादेव सहितास्तत्र भूपा नाशक्नुवन्प्रतिवक्तुं सभायाम्| एकः क्षत्ता धर्म्यमर्थं ब्रुवाणो धर्मबुद्ध्या प्रत्युवाचाल्पबुद्धिम्|| अबुद्ध्वा त्व धर्ममेत सभायामथेच्छसे पाण्डवस्योपदेष्टुम्| .. जानासि त्वं संजय सर्वमेतद्द्यूते वाक्य गर्ह्यमेव यथोक्तम्| स्वय त्वहं प्रार्थये तत्र गन्तुं समाधातुं कार्यमेतद्विपन्नम्|... स्थिताः शमे महात्मानः पाण्डवा धर्मचारिणः | योधाः समर्थास्तद्विद्वन्नाचक्षीथा यथातथम्||'.

Wise men know when they are down and *Sanjaya* was in no small measure aware when he should remain silent. Rebuked by *Krishna* and rebuffed by *Yudhishthira*, *Sanjaya* quietly withdraws and leaves wishing them auspiciousness - शिव and happiness - सुखम, hoping that they will not think ill of him for having spoken what he has spoken but should not have been spoken - 'आमन्त्रये त्वा नरदेवदेव गच्छाम्यहं पाण्डव स्वस्ति तेऽस्तु || कच्चिन्न वाचा वृजिनं हि किंचिदुच्चारितं मे मनसोऽभिषङ्गात्|| जनार्दनं भीमसेनार्जुनौ च माद्रीसुतौ सात्यकिं चेकितानम्| आमन्त्र्य गच्छामि शिवं सुखं व सौम्येन मां पश्यत चक्षुषा नृपाः||'. *Though Krishna* appeared curt and unsparing while speaking to *Sanjaya*, as one fully conscious that as a messenger *Sanjaya* could not have spoken any thing other than what he was briefed, he uses the language which *Kauravas* will understand when *Sanjaya* conveys the intent and purpose *Pandavas* having decided and determined for their future course of action. But *Yudhishthira*, being the symbol of decency and propriety, was more apologetic about *Sanjaya's* behaviour calling him well-wisher who would never speak any unpleasant word 'न नः स्मरस्यप्रिय जातु विद्वन्, विद्मश्च त्वा ते च वय च सर्वे शुद्धात्मानं मध्यगतं सभास्थम् || आप्तो दूतः संजय सुप्रियोऽसि कल्याणवाक्शीलवान्तृप्तिमांश्च | न मुह्येस्त्व संजय जातु मत्या न च क्रुद्ध्येरुच्यमानो दुरुक्तैः ||' therefore, dear to them as if another *Vidura* come to us and therefore dear even to *Arjuna*, 'त्वमेव नः प्रियतमोऽसि दूत इहागच्छेद्विदुरो वा द्वितीयः'. Thereafter, he sends their good wishes to all elders he bids him safe journey, sending his final message to *Duryodhana* either he should give him his *Indraprastha* or be ready for war 'इदं पुनर्वचनं धार्तराष्ट्रं सुयोधनं संजय श्रावयेथाः | यस्ते शरीरे हृदय दुनोति कामः कुरूनसपत्नोऽनुशिष्याम्|| न विद्यते युक्तिरेतस्य काचिन्नैवंविधाः स्याम यथा प्रिय ते | ददस्व वा शक्रपुरी ममैव युद्धस्व वा भारतमुख्य वीर ||'.

Before *Sanjaya* takes leave *Yudhishthithira* has a final message for *Kauravas*. He points out to him that borth the powerful and the weak are both controlled by the ordainor, giving results as per the actions performd by them in earlier life. If *Dritarashtra* inquires about their wellbeing, then tell them they are well and satisfied. In their young age he himself had given him their share and it is not proper

that he should see it being robbed. All can live together peacefully and in prosperity. Therefore, they will be satisfied even if five towns are given to them and livein peace. But they are capable of living in peace as well as fight for their rights, being both soft as well as hard 'उत मन्तमसन्त वा बालं वृद्धं च संजय | उताबाल बलीयासं धाता पकुरुते वशे || नव पसादादबालास्ने पाप्ना गज्यमग्न्दिम् | गज्यं नान्स्थापयित्त्वागं नोपेक्षस्व विनश्यतः || सर्वमप्येनदेकस्य नालं सजय कस्याचिन्| नात संहत्य जीवामो द्विषता मा वशं गमः ||...भातृणां देहि पञ्चानां पञ्च गामान्सुयोधन | शान्तिर्नोऽस्तु महाप्राज्ञ ज्ञातिभिः सह सजय ||... अलमेव शमयास्मि नथा युद्धाय संजय | धर्मार्थ योरलं चाहं मृदवे दारुणाय च ||'.

When *Sanjaya* returns back to *Hastinapaur* he speaks to *Dhritarashtra* of the noble treatment given to him by *Yudhishsthira* and the righteousness not forgetting to convey their respect for the elders, appropriate wishes to those of their age and blessings for the younger one's 'अभिवादयन्ति वृद्धश्च वयस्यांश्च वयस्यवत्| युनश्चाभ्यावदान्पर्थाः प्रतिपूज्य यथावयः ||'.

Chapter VI

Though *Yudhishthira* was fully sympathetic to *Sanjaya* for having to undertake impossible task, he was fully convinced that *Duryodhana* had no intention to part with their share of the kingdom, *Dhritarashtra* becoming a willing accomplice. He found *Sanjaya's* advocacy being justifiable for one who has to advocate the brief assigned to deliver, conceding that a messenger would not speak any thing else than what his master wanted him to convey. But he finds *Dhritarashtra* greedy and does not practice righteousness, all his actions being prompted by selfishness and love for his son - 'गृद्धो राजा धृतराष्ट्रः स्वधर्मं नानुपश्यति | वश्यत्वात्पुत्रगृद्धित्वान्मन्दस्यान्वेति शासनम्|| सुयोधनमतं तिष्ठन्राजास्मासु जनार्दन | मिथ्या चरति लुब्धः सनचरन् हि पियमात्मनः ||'.

Dhritarashtra as usual leans on *Vidura* when concerned and confused with his son's behavior, lamenting how good things can come, when *Vidura* remarks what other thing can be expected when he has given power to evil ones like *Duryodhana*, *Dushasana*, *Karna* and *Shakuni* to rule over the lands 'दुर्योधने सौबले च कर्णे दुःशासने तथा | एतेष्वैश्वर्यमाधाय कथं त्वं भूतिमिच्छसि ||'. *Vidura* advises him that it us futile to antagonize *Krishna* and *Arjuna* who are reported to be verily the ancient seers, with one *essence* in two *forms* born again to punish the evil and protect the noble 'वासुदेवार्जुनौ वीरौ समवेतौ महारथौ | नरनारायणौ देवौ पूर्वदेवाविति श्रुतिः || अजेयौ मानुषे लोके सेन्द्रैरपि सुरासुरैः | एष नारायणः कृष्णः फाल्गुनश्च नरः स्मृतः | नारायणो नरश्चैव सत्वमेकं द्विधाकृतः || तस्मादकर्मैव कर्तव्यमिति होवाच नारदः | एतद्धि सर्वं माचष्ट वृष्णिचक्रस्य वेदवित्||'. Therefore, he finds fault with *Dhritarashtra* for listening to and acting on the advice given by *Karna*, *Shakuni* and *Dushasana*. *Duryodhana*, the foolish son of yours relying on them has been insulting the noble *Pandavas* 'त्रयाणामेव च मतं तत्त्वमेकोऽनुमन्यसे |..दुर्जनेः सूतपुत्रस्य शकुनेः सौबलस्य च | तथा क्षुद्रस्य पापस्य भ्रातुर्दुःशासनस्य च || एतमाश्रित्य पुत्रस्ते मन्दबुद्धिः सुयोधनः | अवामन्यत तान्वीरानदोर्षिपुत्रानरिंदमान्||'.

Therefore, *Vidura* advises him that it is preferable to give *Pandavas* their share so that they too can enjoy their kingdom as would his own sins would, giving no quarters to any one to complain 'पदायैयामुचितं तात राज्यं सत्री पुत्रैः सहितो मोदमानः | न देवानां नापि च मनुष्याणां भविष्यसि त्व तर्कणीयो नारेन्द ||'. One should not only attain kingdom through righteousness and also rule them through righteousness. Only wealth gained through righteousness neither would nor desert him even when ruler desires to part with it 'धर्मेण राज्य विन्देत धर्मेण परिपालयेत्| धर्ममूलां श्रियं पाप्य न जहाति नहूयते ||'. One should give up a person for the family, the family for the town, the town for the nation and the whole world for the *Self* 'त्यजेदकुलार्थे पुरुष ग्रामस्यार्थे कुल त्यजेत्| ग्राम जनपदस्यार्थे आत्मार्थे पृथिवी त्यजे ||'. Then he recalls the time when *Duryodhana* was born when he had told him to abandon him, because if he is not deserted then all his hundred sons to will soon be exterminated 'उक्त मया जातमात्रेऽपि राजन्दुर्योधनंत्यज पुत्रं त्वमेकम्| तस्य त्यागात्पुत्रशतस्य वृद्धिरस्यातयागात्पुत्रशतस्य नाशः ||'.

Dhritarashtra is not pleased with his advice, full of wisdom, lamenting that success would certainly be where righteousness prevails 'सर्वं त्वमायतीयुक्त भाषसे पाज्ञसम्मतम्| न चोत्सहे सुत त्यक्तु यतो धर्मस्ततो जयः ||'. However, he finds fault with *Vidura* complaining that he always speaks what is favorable to *Pandavas*, 'एवमेतद्यथा त्वं मामनुशाससि नित्यदा | ममापि च मतिः सौम्य भवत्येवं यथाऽऽत्थ माम्|| सा तु बुद्धिः कृताप्येव पाण्डवान्पति मे सदा | दुर्योधन समासाद्य पुनर्विपरिवर्तते || न दिष्टमभ्यतिकान्तुं शक्यं भूतेन केनचित्| दिष्टमेव धुवं मन्ये पौरुष तु निरर्थकम्||'. Though he agrees with much what is being spoken, whenever *Duryodhana* comes in his presence his mind changes. Therefore, he concludes that fate indeed is insurmountable and faced with fate all human endeavour is worthless.

Here in *Hastinapura*, on return *Sanjaya* reports to *Dhritarashtra* and others the result of his assignment, informing that they are all well and he gave the message as was conveyed through hum. They have given in return a message which *Yudhishthira* together with *Arjuna* and *Krishna* have authorized him to convey to you. *Sanjaya* also conveys to *Duryodhana Pandava's* message that if he does not desire to give their share and desires war, then are ready for the battle, which may solve their problems 'न चेद् राज्यं मुञ्चति धार्तराष्ट्रो युधिष्ठिरस्य अजमीढस्य राज्ञः || अस्ति नून कर्म कृतं पुरस्तादनिर्विष्ट पापक धार्तराष्ट्रैः |'. If *Duryodhana*

desires to fight them, so be it, because by his action their desires will surely be fulfilled. In that case to please them he need not engage in negotiations or in giving them half of their share. When ever filled with anger, being foolish and confused sees his brothers and army destroyed and disposed, *Duryodhana* stands humbled, and then he would repent, his entire arrogance destroyed. Even when it is not lifted *Gandeev* bow is stirring and the errors are becoming restless to fly towards enemies. Killing with these armours he will destroy all leaving not one in the end. Only then he will be at peace. Convey this to the *Kauarvas* 'नःश्रेयोऽद्य मन्यते धार्तराष्ट्रो निवृत्तोऽर्थः सकलः पाण्डवानाम्| मा तत्कार्षीः पाण्डवस्यार्थहेतोरुपैहि युद्धं यदि मन्यसे त्वम्||...सभातो वै सहसैन्यः सभृत्यो भ्रष्टैश्वर्यः क्रोधवशोऽल्पचेताः | दर्पस्यान्ते निहतो वेपमानः पश्चान्मदस्तप्स्यति धार्तराष्ट्रः ||... अनालब्धं जृम्भति गाण्डीवं धनुरनाहता कम्पति मे धनुर्ज्या | बाणाश्च मे तूणमुखाद्विसृत्य मुहुर्मुहुर्गन्तुमुशन्ति चैव ||...वधे धृतो वेगवतः प्रमुञ्चन नाहं प्रजाः किंचिदिहावशिष्ये | शान्तिं लप्स्ये परमो ह्येष भावः स्थिरो मम ब्रूहि गावल्गणे तान्||'.

Dhritarashtra recalling *Bhima's* strength and his vow, coolly replies to *Vidura* saying they are all strong, even then he has not been able to restrain his sons, they being like his owns sons, both being grandsons of *Bhishma* and disciples of *Drona*. Wisdom does not seem to destroy sorrow, sorrow itself obscuring wisdom. The game of dice and all earlier events seem to the cause of the *Kauravas* troubles. Greedy of wealth and possession, *Duryodhana* has been performing evil actions. Indeed all these escalating events are the result of the *Time* in its inexorable movement, therefore *Dhritarashtra* feels himself tied without any respite 'बलीयः सर्वतो दिष्टं पुरुषस्य विशेषतः | पश्यन्नपि जय तेषां न नियच्छामि यत्सुतान्||...यथैषां मामकास्तात तथैषा पाण्डवा अपि | पौत्रा भीष्मस्य शिष्याश्च द्रोणस्य च कृपस्य च ||... न तु मन्ये विधाताय ज्ञानं दुःखस्य संजय | भवत्यतिबलं ह्येतज्ज्ञानस्याप्युपघातकम्||...द्यूतप्रमुखमाभाति कुरूणां व्यसनं महत् | मन्देनैश्वर्यकामेन लोभात्पापमिदं कृतम्||..मन्ये पर्यायधर्मोऽयं कालस्यात्यन्तगामिनः | चक्रे प्रधिरिवासक्तो नास्य शक्यं पलायितुम्||'.

Finally in desperation he exclaims to *Sanjaya* that he thinks it would better if war with *Pandavas* is avoided or else the entire *Kuru* race will without doubt be exterminated. In his opinion that alone is the beneficial bringing peace to his mind 'नैरयुद्धं साधु मन्ये कुरवस्तन्निबोधत | युद्धे विनाशः कृत्स्नस्य कुलस्य भविता ध्रुवम्|| एषा मे परमा बुद्धिर्यया शाम्यति मे मनः | यदि त्वयुद्धमिष्टं वो वयं शान्त्यै यतामहे ||'. But *Sanjaya* expresses surprise that knowing *Arjuna's* valour, why he an intelligent person like him, succumbed to his son's pressure ! At the time of the game of dice, compassion equally for both was what was expected from him, instead of expressing pleasure saying, *we are winning, and we are winning*, overlooking all the humiliation being heaped on *Pandavas*, only thinking that his sons will thereby win the whole kingdom. *Panchala*, *Matsya*, *Kekaya*, *Shursena*, *Shalva* being devoted to *Yudhishthira* would side with him and not respect your suzerainty. In fact, both *Vidura* and he had earlier warned him of the consequences but now worrying about *Bhima's* strength and vow is of no use lamenting that the entire kingdom will now go the *Pandavas* 'इदं तु नाभिजानामि तव धीरस्य नित्यशः | यत्पुत्रमशमागच्छेस्तत्त्वज्ञः सव्यसाचिनः ||...इदं जितमिदं लब्धमिति श्रुत्वा पराजितान्| द्यूतकाले महाराज स्मयसे स्म कुमारवत्|| परुषाण्युच्यमानांश्च पुरा पार्थानुपेक्षसे | कृत्स्नं राज्यं जयन्तीति प्रपातं नानुपश्यसि ||...यदिदं ते विलपितं पाण्डवान्प्रति भारत | अनीशेनेव राजेन्द्र सर्वमेतन्निरर्थकम्||'.

There was, however, *Duryodhana* nearby to console and instill confidence in his father saying that they are equally competent to defeat them all, therefore he need not have any worry - 'न भेतव्यं महाराज न शोच्या भवता वयम्| समर्थाः स्म परान्जेतु बलिनः समरे विभो ||. Then to the emotionally disturbed *Dhritarashtra*, he obscures his mind further slyly informing that when *Pandavas* were being sent to their exile, *Krishna* had come to *Hastinapur* with a huge army and had spoken ill of him. Then under his leadership they all sat around and discussed the destruction of *Kauravas* and giving the kingdom to *Pandavas*. At that time being frightened, he reported to *Bhishma* and others that *Pandavas* may not stick to their resolve, *Krishna* being set in their extermination, excepting *Vidura* and *Yudhishthira* himself 'वने प्रव्राजितान्पार्थान्यदाऽऽयान्मधुसूदन | महता बलचक्रेण पराराष्ट्रावमर्दिना ||..राजानश्चान्वयुः पार्थान्वहवोऽन्येऽनुयायनः || इन्द्रप्रस्थस्य चादूरात्समाहारमुर्महारथाः | व्यगर्हयंश्च संगम्य भवन्तः कुरुभिः सह ||..न ते स्थास्यन्ति समये पाण्डवा इति मे मतिः | समुच्छेदं हि नः कृत्स्नं वासुदेवश्चिकीर्षति || ऋते चविदुरात्सर्वे युयं वध्या मता मम | धृतराष्ट्रस्तु धर्मज्ञो न वध्यः कुरुसत्तम || समुच्छेदं च कृत्स्नं नः कृत्वा तात जनार्दनः | एकराज्यं कुरूणां स्म चिकीर्षति युधिष्ठिरे ||'. Then, as a final blow for sympathy, since defeat is inevitable, he considers submission and surrender would not be a mistake,

but it is his blind father for whom he has apprehension 'प्रणिपाते न दोषोऽस्ति सन्धिर्नः शश्वतीः समाः | पितरं त्वेव शोचामि प्रज्ञानेत्रं जनाधिपम्||'. He has already sufferd enough for his transgressions and his brothers have aligned themselves because of their love for him.

The assembled elders are taken by his deception and seeing him despondent, 'मत्वा मां महती चिन्तामास्थितं व्यथितेन्द्रियम्|' gathered around him to bolster his confidence. *Bhishma, Drona* and other consoled him saying that if *Pandavas* bear such grudge against him then they would never be successful in overpowering them, since *Kauaravs* are presently in control of the kingdom and rulers of different regions have goodwill for them. If they come they will surely be cut in pieces 'अभिद्रुग्धाः परं चेन्नो न भतव्य परंतप | असमर्थाः परे जेतुमस्मानायुधि संस्थितान्|| एकैकशः समर्थाः स्मो विजेतुं सर्वपार्थिवान्| आगच्छन्तु विनेष्यामो दर्पमेषां शितैः शरैः ||'. Having thus their sympathy in this manner, *Duryodhana* then turns to *Dhritarashtra* and assures that each of these rulers are strong to fight with *Pandavas* therefore he need have not concern. In fact *Yudhishthira*, frightened of his massive army has already scaled down his demand to only five towns 'युधिष्ठिरः पुरं हित्वा पञ्च ग्रामान् स याचति | भीतो हि मामकात्सैन्यात्प्रभावाच्चैव मे विभो ||'.

Then becoming self adulatory, *Duryodhana* assures *Dhritarashtra* that if he thinks *Bhima* is strong, then he should also know that there is no one equal to him in fighting with mace, nor was there any in the past or will ever be in future, which has been accepted even by *Balarama* - 'मत्समो हि गदायुद्धे पृथिव्यां नास्ति कश्चन | नासीत्कश्चिदतिक्रान्तो भविता न च कश्चन || दुर्योधनसमो नास्ति गदायामिति निश्चयः | संकर्षणस्य भद्रं ते यत्तदैनमुपावसम्|| युद्धे संकर्षणसमो बलेनाभ्यधिको भुवि | गदाप्रहारं भीमो मे न जातु विषहेद्युधि ||'. *Bhishma*, whom even gods cannot defeat and who can die at his *will*, is willing to fight for him even as others are willing to fight *Pandavas*. The five brothers, *Drishtadhyumna* and *Satyaki* are considered their mainstay whereas he has the support of *Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Karna, Samadatta, Shlaya* and many more and also huge army. Therefore the king need not worry 'एतत् सर्वं समाज्ञाय बलाग्र्यं मम भारत | न्यूनतां पाण्डवानां च न मोहं गन्तुमर्हसि ||'. In fact *Duryodhana* is surprised that his father should worry that *Pandavas* alone can win, knowing both *are* born from the same stock, - 'उभौ स्व एकजातीयौ तथोभौ भूमिगोचरौ | अथ कस्मात्पाण्डवानामेकतो मन्यसे जयम्||'. In fact all the strength of the *Pandavas* is concentrated in the five brothers, *Drishtadhyumna* and *Satyaki*, whereas the numbers of proven warriors on their side are many alike *Bhishma, Drona, Asavatthana, Karna* and others. He has eleven battalions where they have only seven. How can there be defeat for them ? Knowing all this *Dhritarashtra* should have no despondency 'पञ्च ते भ्रातरः सर्वे धृष्टद्युम्नोऽथ सात्यकिः | परेषां सप्त ये राजन्योधाः सार बलं मतम्|| अस्माकं तु विशिष्टा ये भीष्मद्रोणकृपादयः... अक्षौहिण्यो हि मे राजन्दशैका च समाहृताः | न्यूनाः परेषां सप्तैव कस्मान्मे स्यात्पराजयः ||'.

Dhritarashtra in spite of his blindness could some times see where his good fortune lies. He cautions his son that *Yudhishthira* is endowed with splendour of a *Kshatriya* and austerity of a *Brahmin* from childhood; therefore, it would be his misfortune if he overlooks these endowments, when he fights with him. Therefore it is better to give up the fight, which no one favours, knowing well that he has taken this step instigated by *Dushasana, Karna* and *Shakuni* 'क्षत्रं तेजो ब्रह्मचारी कौमारादपि पाण्डवः | तेन संयुगमेष्यन्ति मन्दा विलपतो मम || दुर्योधन निवर्तस्व युद्धाद्भरतसत्तम | न हि युद्धं प्रशंसन्ति सर्वावस्थमरिंदम ||.. न त्वं करोषि कामेन कर्णः कारयिता तव | दुःशासनश्च पापात्मा शकुनिश्चापि सौबलः ||'.

Duryodhana rejects all these fears saying that he has come to this decision depending not on the support of others but on his own, seeing the battle as a great sacrifice to be performed by *Karna* and himself with *Yudhishthira* as the oblation offered therein and chariots, swords, arrows, armours as the materials used in that sacrifice and the four horses tied to the chariot becoming the presiding priests. He will offer many soldiers to *Yama*, and killing *Pandavas* in the battle either rule the world or *Pandavas* will rule killing him 'नाहं भवति न द्रोणे नाश्वत्थाम्नि न संजये | न भीष्मे न च काम्बोजे न कृपे न च बाल्हिके ||..अन्येषु वा तावकेषु भारं कृत्वा समाह्वयम्|| अहं च तात कर्णश्च रणयज्ञं वितत्य वै | युधिष्ठिरं पशुं कृत्वा दीक्षितौ भरतर्षभ || रथो वेदी स्रुवः खड्गो गदा स्रुक्कवचं सदः | चातुर्होत्रं च धुर्या मे शरा दर्भा हविर्यशः || आत्मयज्ञेन नृपते इष्ट्वा वैवस्वतं रणे | विजित्य च समेष्यावो हतामित्रौ श्रिया वृतौ || अहं हि पाण्डवान्हत्वा प्रशास्ता पृथिवीमिमाम् मां वा हत्वा पाण्डुपुत्रा भोक्तारः पृथिवीमिमाम्||'.As a final affirmation, *Duryodhaya* declares that he may give up his claim to the kingdom but will never agree to live with *Pandavas* In fact he will not part even as much land as would

stand on the tip of a needle- 'त्यक्तं मे जीवितं राज्यं धनं सर्वं च पार्थिव | न जातु पाण्डवैः सार्धं वसेयमहच्युत || यावद्धि सूच्यातीक्ष्णाया विध्येदग्रेण मारिष | तावदप्यपरित्याज्यं भूमेर्नः पाण्डवान् प्रति ||.

At this stage *Sanjaya* speaks to *Dhritarashtra* of the great friendship, fondness and undisguised cordiality between *Krishna* and *Arjuna*, narrating an instance when he had to visit them to convey his message, when both were both in their private quarters in the company of *Satyabhama* and *Draupadi*, where even *Abhimanyu* or *Nakula* and *Sahdeva* could not enter. Restraining himself with downcast eyes and hesitating with his toe finger scratching the ground, he saw them with their bodies smeared with fragrance and enjoying their drink. Adorned with good clothes and fragrant flowers, they were sitting on a golden coach, adorned with good clothes and fragrant flowers. He saw *Krishna's* both feet rested on *Arjuna's* lap, and *Arjuna's* one foot on *Draupadi's* lap and the other on that of *Satyabhama*. When *Arjuna* pushed a stool to him, he just touched it in acknowledgement, preferring to sit on the floor. Then it struck his mind how unfortunate that *Duryodhana* should not be able to understand these two resembling *Vishnu* and *Indra*, relying on *Bhishma* and *Drona* and enamoured by *Karna's* talk 'पादाङ्गुलीरभिप्रेक्षन्प्रयतोऽहं कृताञ्जलिः | शुद्धान्तं प्राविशं राजन्नाख्यातुं नरदेवयोः || नैवाभिमन्युर्नयमौ तं देशमभियान्ति वै | यत्र कृष्णौ च कृष्णा च सत्यभामा च भामिनी || उभौ मध्वासवक्षीबावुभौ चन्दनभूषितौ | स्रग्विणौ वरवस्त्रौ तौ दिव्याभरणभूषितौ ||..अर्जुनोत्सङ्गगौ पादौ केशवस्योपलक्षये | अर्जुनस्य च कृष्णायां सत्यायां च महात्मनः || काञ्चनं पादपीठं तु पार्थो मे प्रादिशत्तदा | तदहं पाणिना स्पृष्ट्वा ततो भूमावुपाविशम्||..इन्द्राविष्णुसमावेतौ मन्दात्मा नावबुद्ध्यते | संश्रयाद् द्रोणभीष्माभ्यां कर्णस्य च विकत्थनात्||'.

Then *Krishna* spoke to him words each of which was illuminating and enlightening, to repeat his them in the presence of *Bhishma* and *Drona*. Inform *Kauravas* to perform sacrifices, give charities, fulfill all their desires and enjoy all type of pleasures because Yudhishthira is getting restless and fear is fast approaching. When they humiliated *Draupadi* in the open assembly, he was far away from *Dvaraka*. One whose *Gandeev* bow is companion, *Krishna* is his second companion, with whom they have established enmity. There is no one among gods, *asuras*, *yaksha*, *gandharavas* and *nagas* who could defeat *Arjuna*. Strength, valour, splendour, swiftness, quickness and absence of anger which *Arjuna* possesses no one other does possess. Listening to these words spoken by *Krishna*, *Arjuna* too became enthused - 'संजयेदं वचो ब्रूया धार्तराष्ट्रं मनीषिणाम्| कुरुमुख्यस्य भीष्मस्य द्रोणस्यापि च शृण्वतः ||..यजध्वं विविधैर्यज्ञैर्विप्रेभ्यो दत्त दक्षिणाः | पुत्रैर्दारैश्च मोदध्वं महद्वो भयमागतम्||...ऋणमेतत्प्रवृद्धं मे हृदयान्नापसर्पति | यद्गोविन्देति चुक्रोश मां दूरवासिनम्|| तेजोमयं दुराधर्षं गाण्डीवं यस्य कार्मुकम्| मद्द्वितीयेन तेनेह वैरं वः सव्यसाचिना ||...देवासुरमनुष्येषु यक्षगन्धर्वभोगिषु | न तं पश्याम्यहं युद्धे पाण्डवं योऽभ्ययाद्रणे ||...बलं वीर्यं च तेजश्च शीघ्रता लघुहस्तता | अविषादश्च धैर्यं च पार्थान्नान्यत्र विद्यते || ...केशवस्य वचः श्रुत्वा किरीटी श्वेतवाहनः | अर्जुनस्तन्महद्वाक्यमब्रवीद्रोमहर्षणम् ||'.

Listening to *Sanjaya's* report, *Dhritarashtra becomes* convinced that *Pandavas* are more powerful with their divine and human strength than *Kauravas*. Therefore he tells *Duryodhana* that he is very troubled seeing that his strength is truly less than that of the *Pandavas*, which he realizes now more than ever earlier. Therefore, he suggests conciliation 'दुर्योधनेयं चिन्ता मे शश्वन्न व्युपशाम्येत | सत्यं ह्येतदहं मन्ये प्रत्यक्षं नानुमानतः ||..क्षयोदयं सुमहान्कुरूणां प्रत्युपस्थितः | अस्य चेत्कलहस्यान्तः शमादन्यो न विद्यते || शमो मे रोचते नित्यं पार्थैस्तात न विग्रहः | कुरुभ्यो हि सदा मन्ये पाण्डवाञ्शक्तिमत्तरान्||'.

Duryodhana is, however, completely impervious to the danger which he is facing, seethes within with repressed anger. He tells his father that if he thinks that *Pandavas* are difficult to be defeated because they are helped by divine forces, that is not so. *Vyasa* and *Narada* had earlier told them that only through renunciation of desire, hatred, attachment and greed the gods come to have divine attributes. Therefore, Gods can not be expected to engage themselves like human beings with desire, hatred, attachment and greed. If *Agni, Vayu, Dharma Indra* and *Ashvins* performed their actions under the influence of desires, then *Kunti's* sons would have had to suffer. Therefore, he need not have any unnecessary fears, because Gods always have divine nature not the *asuric* nature. In case the gods succumb to desire, hatred and greed then they would have no effect on human beings 'अशक्या देवसचिवाः पार्थाः स्युरिति यद्भवान्| मन्यते तद् भयं व्येतु भवतो राजसत्तम || अकामद्वेषसंयोगाल्लोभद्रोहाच्च भारत | उपेक्षया च भावानां देवा देवत्वमाप्नुयात्|| दैवप्यपेक्षका ह्येते शश्वद्भावेषु भारत || ...नैव मानुषवद्देवाः प्रवर्तन्ते कदाचन | कामात्क्रोधात्तथा लोभाद् द्वेषाच्च भरतर्षभ || अथ चेत्कामसंयोगाद्द्वेषो लोभश्चलक्ष्यते | देवेषु

देवपामाण्यान्नैपां तद्विक्रमिष्येत ||'.

In an expansive mood, *Duryodhana* speaks his mind saying that he himself has many miraculous powers which if he uses can destroy the entire creation with fire it being snuffed out in the process. If there be any great splendour among gods then know that even such splendour exists in him also. He can restore the worlds after destroying them in hundred pieces. He can freeze the waters enabling chariots to pass through, he being endowed with both *divine* and *demonic* powers 'मयाभिमन्त्रितः शश्वज्जतवेदाः प्रशाम्यति | दिधक्षुः सकाल्लोंकान्परिक्षिप्य समन्ततः || यद् वा परमकं तेजो येन युक्ता दिवौकसः | ममाप्यनुपमं भूयो देवेभ्यो विद्धि भारत || विदीर्यमाणां वसुधां गिरीणां शिखराणि च | लोकस्य पश्यतो राजन्राजन् स्थापयाम्याम्यभिमन्त्रणात्||...स्तम्भितास्वप्सु गच्छन्ति मया रथपदातयः | देवासुराणां भावानामाहमेकाः पार्वर्तिता ||'.

It is for this reason that there are no poisonous serpents in his region, and if there are any they are so under his protection. Rains fall on proper time and people are righteous and happy. There have never been any floods or any famines. Those whom he hates, for then no divinity comes to help. If they were helpful to his enemies then *Pandavas* would not have lived in exile for fourteen years. Neither gods, nor *asuras, yakshas* nor *gandharvas* are capable of helping *Pandavas* 'भयानाकानि विषये व्यालादीनि न सन्ति मे | मन्त्रगुप्तानि भूतानि न हिंसन्ति भयंकराः || निकामवर्षी पर्जन्यो राजन् विषयवासिनाम्| धर्मिष्ठाश्च प्रजाः सर्वा ईतयश्च न सन्ति मे |..यदि ह्येते समर्थाः स्युर्मद्द्विषस्त्रातुमञ्जसा | न स्म त्रयोदश समाः पार्था दुःखमवाप्नुयुः || नैव देवा न गन्धर्वा नासुरा न च राक्षसाः | शक्तास्त्रातुं मया द्विष्टं सत्यमेतद्ब्रवीमि ते ||'.

Duryodhana is a great megalomaniac who because of his extra-ordinary power considers himself equal if not greater than the Gods, very much like *asuras* like *Hiranyakashipu* and others who declared themselves to be even the supreme god himself. Therefore, in condescending manner *Duryodhana* tells *Dhritarashtra* that he has been called a man of Truth, because whatever he speaks comes to be true in practice. His greatness is clearly known to people in all quarters. It is only to assure his father that he has to speak now and not to praise himself. In fact he has never praised himself because it is unbecoming for people to do so. Therefore, *Dhritarashtra* will hear one day about his success over *Pandavas* who would then disappear completely like the rivers disappearing in the ocean. He is great in intelligence, in splendour, in strength and valour, in wisdom and in enterprise in greater measure than in *Pandavas*. He has skill and expertise perceived in *Bhishnu, Drona* and *Kripa* 'भविष्यतीदमिति वा यद्ब्रवीमि परन्तप | नान्यथा भूतपूर्वं च सत्यवागिति मां विदुः ||..न ह्यहं श्लाघनो राजन्भूतपूर्वः कदाचन | असदाचरितं ह्येतद्यदात्मानं प्रशंसति || पाण्डवांश्चैव मत्स्यांश्च पञ्चालान्केकयैः सह | सात्यकिं वासुदेवं च श्रोतासि विजितान् मया || सरितः सागरं प्राप्य यथा नश्यन्ति सर्वशः | तथैव ते विनङ्क्षन्ति मामासाद्य सहान्वयाः || परा बुद्धिः परं तेजो वीर्यं च परमं मम | परा विद्या परो योगो मम तेभ्यो विशिष्यते || पितामहश्च द्रोणश्च कृपः शल्यः शलस्तथा | अस्त्रेषु यत्प्रजानन्ति सर्वं तन्मयि विद्यते ||'.

This extensive statement by *Duryodhana* is given here to impress the extent to which *evil* can present itself as the *divine*, possessed of supernatural powers, arrogant in success and proud in defeat, both perhaps as the effulgence of the same *Brahman*, whose progeny is said to be both देवs and असुरs. In metaphysical sense, *Duryodhana* is a human being in whom the wisdom of the luminous (सात्विक), the enterprise of the energetic (राजसिक) and obscurity of the dull (तामसिक) all find refuge, who knowing his own धर्म makes himself bold to point out that 'अकामद्वेषसंयोगाल्लोभद्रोहाच्च भारत | उपेक्षया च भावाना देवा देवत्वमाप्नुयात्||, at the same is not inclined to follow धर्म and knowing that 'देवष्वपेक्षका ह्येते शश्वद्भावेषु भारत ||' is not disinclined to desist from अधर्म, declaring 'जानामि धर्मं न च मे प्रवृत्तिः जानाम्यधर्मं न च मे निवृत्तिः | केनापि देवेन हृदि स्थितेन यनहा नियुक्तो तथा करोमि ||' and declaring finally with great pride bordering arrogance as he falls dieing finally that who among many claim more glorious death, have having received instruction in proper manner, having ruled wisely the extensive lands reaching the sea and standing supreme defeating many rulers, his death, indeed, is what every warrior fighting war in righteous manner desires, having enjoyed many pleasures which are even not available to gods and humans and attained wealth and possessions 'अधीत विधिवद्दत्त भूःप्रशस्ता ससागरा || मूर्ध्नि स्थितमर्मित्राणां को नु स्वन्तमरो मया | यदिष्टं क्षत्रबन्धूनां स्वधममनुपश्यताम्|| यदिदप्राप्त को नु स्वन्तमरो मया | देवाना मानुषा भोगा: प्राप्ता असुलभा नृपैः || ऐश्वर्यं चोत्तमं प्राप्तं को नु स्वन्तमरो मया |'.

It is indeed, with great candour and clarity of mind *Duryodhana* says as he lay breathing out

lowly his last breath, that death is for all as the *Time cycle* revolves and though by *divine will*, great nany calamities have fallen on him, he did not run away from the battle, being ever enthused to fight and vith all brothers dead, he is giving up his life on the battle field, even when killed in most unrighteous nanner. If *vedic* scriptures be authoritative then he has indeed attained immutable worlds. Even ccepting *Krishna's* immeasurable splendour, he has not deviated from performing his duties according o धर्म. He considers himself blessed with fruits of those actions. Therefore, on no account, anyone should grieve for him 'विनाशः सर्वभूतानां कालपर्यायमागतः | सोऽयं मां समनुप्राप्तः प्रत्यक्षं भवता हियः |..दिष्ट्या नाहं परावृत्तो युद्धे कस्यांस्विदापदि | दिष्ट्याहं निहतः पापैश्छलेनैव विशेषतः || उत्साहश्च कृतो नित्यं मया दिष्ट्या युयुत्सता | दिष्ट्या चास्मिन् हतो युद्धे निहतज्ञातिबान्धवः || मन्यमानः प्रभावं च कृष्णस्यामिततेजसः | तेन न च्यावितश्चाहं क्षत्रधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात्|| स मया समनुप्राप्तो नास्मि शोच्यः कथंचन | कृतं भवद्भिः मदृशामनुरूपमिवात्मनः || यतितं विजये नित्य दैवं तु दुरतिक्रमम्|'.

A dispassionate study of *Duryodhana's* character brings one to the inevitable conclusion that creative activity includes invariably the constructive as well as the destructive activity in life. Therefore, *Brahman* is the source of all creation as well as the dissolution. Even as दैविक forces become the instruments in creation, the असुरी forces too are his instruments in dissolution as *Krishna himself* did declare to *Arjuna* later that 'ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति | भ्रामयन्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ||' and 'मयैवैते निहताः पूर्वमेव निमित्तमात्रं भव ... .'. It is in this context that *Duryodhana's* has great faith in divine will दैव, when he says, 'केनापि देवेन हृदि स्थितेन यथा नियुक्तो तथा करोमि ||' or 'दिष्ट्या नाहं परावृत्तो युद्धे कस्यांस्विदापदि |', 'दिष्ट्याहं निहतः पापैश्छलेनैव विशेषतः ||'. After all, *Brihad Aranayaka Up.* has declared, 'द्वया ह प्राजपत्याः ; देवाश्चासुराश्च |'

Compared to *Duryodhana*, *Karna* was not far behind. A supremely noble soul but with mind obscured by events that transpired in personal life, his temperament was not very unlike that of his friend and master. Therefore, without any resentment to the earlier reprimand given by *Dhritarashtra, Karna* intervenes in assuring his fried and well-wisher that even if *Bhishma* and *Drona* align with *Pandava*, he will be able to defeat *Pandavas* all by himself. He consoles him and his friend that the great sage, though was capable of destroying the whole worlds, did not curse him for having procured weapons informing surreptitiously that he was a *Brahmin*, excepting saying that he may not be able to recall his weapons when the need arises. The *Brahmastra* given by the sage is still with him, even as he is young in age, he is quite capable to defeat *Pandavas*. Let *Bhishma* and *Drona* remains by his side, he will go alone and defeat all the *Pandavas*.

Hearing these arrogant words, *Bhishma* puts him down saying the weapons given to him by *Indra* would be destroyed by *Krishna's* discus even as the *Bhishma* and *Drona* by *Arjuna. Krishna* who is protecting *Arjuna* and who had destroyed *Banasura* and *Bhaumasur* earlier will destroy everyone, 'यां चापि शक्तिं त्रिदशाधिपस्ते ददौ महात्मा भगवान्महेन्द्रः | भस्मीकृतां तां समरे विशीर्णां चक्राहतां द्रक्ष्यसि केशवेन || यस्ते शरः सर्पमुखो विभाति सदाग्र्यमाल्यैर्महितः शरौघैः सह त्वया यास्यति कर्ण नाशम्|| बाणस्य भौमस्य च कर्ण हन्ता किरीटिनं रक्षति वासुदेवः | यस्त्वादृशानां च वरीयसां च हन्ता रिपूणां तुमुले प्रागाढं ||'. Hearing these strong words of censure, *Karna* feels offended. He protests saying that undoubtedly *Krishna* is all that *Bhishma* speaks of him and may be even more. But talking to him in such disparaging manner was not proper nor will it lead any one anywhere. Therefore, he would rather rest his arms and *Bhishma* will no more see him using them here or in any battles. Only when his anger becomes calm, will all see his valour in the battle 'असंशयं वृष्णिपतिर्यथोक्तस्तथा च भूयांश्च ततो महात्मा | अहं यदुक्तः परुषं तु किञ्चित्पितामहस्तस्य फलं शृणोतु || न्यस्यामि शस्त्राणि न जातु संख्ये पितामहो द्रक्ष्यति मां सभायाम्| त्वयि प्रशान्ते तु मम प्रभावं द्रक्ष्यन्ति सर्वे भुवि भूमिपालाः ||.

Duryodhana protests seeing *Bhishma* rebuke *Karna*, saying that as human beings initiated in education both *Pandavas* and *Kauravas* are identical, even as both identical in birth also, then why does he consider *Kunti's* sons more capable than *Kauravas*. He does not claim success in the war based on the competence of *Bhishma, Drona, Kripa* or *Bahlika* but confident that he himself along with *Karna* and *Dushasana* are capable of killing the *Pandavas*, seeing whose army with chariots and elephants the arrogance of *Pandavas* and *Krishna* will be destroyed 'सदृशानां मनुष्येषु सर्वेषां तुल्यजन्मनाम्| कथमेकान्ततस्तेषां पार्थानां मन्यसे जयम्|| वयं च तेऽपि तुल्या वै वीर्येण च पराक्रमैः | समेन वयसा चैव प्रातिभेन श्रुतेन च || अस्त्रेण योधयुग्या च शीघ्रत्वे कौशले तथा | सर्वे स्म समजातीयाः सर्वे

मनुष्ययोनयः ||...नाहं भवानि न द्रोणं न कृपं न च वाह्लिके || अन्येपु च नरेन्द्रेपु परक्रम्य समारंभे | अहं वैकर्तनः कर्णो भ्राता दुःशासनश्च मे || पाण्डवान्समरे पञ्च हनिष्यामः शितैः शरैः |...पश्यन्तास्ते परांस्तत्र रथनागसमाकुलान्| तदा दर्प विमोक्ष्यान्ति पाण्डवाः स च केशवः ||'.

Vidura too counsels him that *Duryodhana* sees only the fruits and not the danger, thinks of fighting *but* no valour comparable to that of *Arjuna*. When *Drupad, Virata* and furious *Arjuna* come on the battle field like fire associated with wind, then no one will be saved. Therefore turning to *Dhritarashtra*, he requests him to give *Yudhishthira* refuge because in the war no one can tell who will win '...तव पुत्रोऽयं पृथिवीमेकं इच्छति | मधु पश्यति सम्मोहात्प्रपातं नानुपश्यति || दुर्योधनो योद्धुमनाः समरे सव्यसाचिना | न च पश्यामि तेजोऽस्य विक्रमं वा तथा विधम्||..द्रुपदो मत्स्यराजश्च संक्रुद्धश्च धनंजयः | न शेषयेयुः समरे वायुयुक्ता इवाग्नयः || अङ्के कुरुष्व राजानं धृतराष्ट्र युधिष्ठिरम्| युध्यतोर्हि द्वयोर्युद्धे नैकान्तेन भवेज्जयः ||'.

Rattled by the advice given by the elders, *Dhritarashtra* again appeals *Duryodhana* saying that he is on the dangerous path, thinking of robbing the splendour of the five *Panadvas* who are like the five elements which nurture the world. Therefore he does no see any chance of his success without end in his own death. In addition how can any sensible person think of conquer *Krishna* who is the lord of the three worlds. Where there is *Arjuna*, there surely is *Krishna*. And where *Krishna* is, that sides become difficult to be overpowered. Therefore, stop *Duryodhana* at this stage and do as your elders tell you. 'पञ्चानां पाण्डुपुत्राणां यत्तेजः परिजिहीर्षसि | पञ्चानामिव भूतानां महतां लोकधारिणाम्|| ..परं रातिमसम्प्रेत्य न त्वं शान्तुमिहार्हसि || यः पुनः प्रतिमानेन त्रिँल्लोकानतिरिच्यते | तं कृष्णं पुण्डरीकाक्षं कोनु युद्ध्येत बुद्धिमान्|| वासुदेवोऽपि दुर्धर्षो यतात्मा यत्र पाण्डवः | अविषह्य पृथिव्यापि तद्बलं यत्र केशवः || तिष्ठ तात सतां वाक्यं सुहृदामर्थवादिनाम्| वृद्धं शान्तनवं भीष्मं तितिक्षस्व पितामहम्||'.

When *Duryodhana* do not listen to any thing that is being spoken to him, then all those assembled there leave them without any further word. At that time, *Vyasa* arrives there asks *Sanjaya* to relate to all the greatness of both *Krishna* and *Arjuna*. Then he speaks briefly about those two ancient archers, who have descended in this world to fulfill the *divine intent* and *purpose*. Krishna is one who has destroyed easily *Naraka, Shambar, Kamsa* and *Shishupala*. Independent, remaining himself free he can completely envelop the whole earth, space and the heavens. It is *Krishna* on one side and the whole world on the other weigh in importance, capable of destroying the whole world with single thought but whom no one can destroy. Where there exists *the Prime Existence*, righteousness, splendour there dwells *Krishna* and where *Krishna* exists there dwells victory. As the supreme person he is the soul of every creature, enveloping the earth, space and heaven. With his divine power he turns the *Wheel of Time*, of the World and of the *yugas*. At this moment with the help of the *Pandavas*, he will destroy *Kauravas* because he is the *Time, Death* and the controller of all creatures. Even though he is the Lord of all creation, yet he is engaged in performing actions like a farmer. By his power of illusion he confounds the world but those who surrender him, he delivers them from the illusion 'अर्जुनो वासुदेवश्च धन्विनौ परमार्चितौ | कामादन्यत्र सम्भूतौ सर्वभावाय सम्मितौ || एकतो वा जगत्कृत्स्नमेकतो वा जनार्दनः | सारतो जगतः कृत्स्नादतिरिक्तो जनार्दनः || भस्म कुर्याज्जगदिदं मनसैव जनार्दनः | न तु कृत्स्नं जगच्छक्तं भस्म कर्तुं जनार्दनम्|| यतः सत्यं यतो धर्मो यतो ह्रीरार्जवं यतः | ततो भवति गोविन्दो यतः कृष्णस्ततो जयः || पृथिवीं चान्तरिक्षं च दिवं च पुरुषोत्तमः | विचेष्टयति भूतात्मा क्रीडन्निव जनार्दनः || कालचक्रं जगच्चक्रं युगचक्रं च केशवः | आत्मयोगेन भगवान्परिवर्तयतेऽनिशम्| कालस्य च हि मृत्योश्च जङ्गमस्थावरस्य च | ईशते भगवानेकः सत्यमेतद्ब्रवीमि ते || ईशन्नापि महायोगी सर्वस्य जगतो हरिः | कर्माण्यारभते कर्तुं कीनाश इव वर्धनः ||'.

When *Dhritarashtra* persuades *Sanjaya* to tell him how one can be aware of *Krishna's divine essence* - 'कथं त्वं माधवं वेत्थ सर्वलोकमहेश्वरम्| कथमेनं न वेदाहं तन्ममाचक्ष्व संजय ||'. *Sanjaya* informs him that *Dhritarashtra* does not have that awareness while he himself has. One who is devoid of the wisdom of the scriptures and whose intelligence is obscured, for such one awareness of *Krishna's* splendour is not accessible 'शृणु राजन्न ते विद्या मम विद्या न हीयते | विद्याहीनस्तमोध्वस्तो नाभिजानाति केशवम्||'. When asked again what is the nature of such awareness, *Sanjaya* clarifies that since his awareness he does not succumb to delusion, does not perform unrighteous actions, since his entire being has been completely purified, whereby with the assistance of scriptures he has been able to be enlightened to *Krishna's* essence as it really is 'मायां न सेवे भद्रं ते न वृथा धर्ममाचरे | शुद्धभावं गतो भक्त्या शास्त्राद्वेद्मि जनार्दनम्||'.

Listening to his confident reply, *Dhritarashtra* again appeals to *Duryodhana* to heed *Sanjaya's*

advice since he is his well-wisher and take, therefore, refuge in *Krishna.* But *Duryodhana* says that even if it is accepted that *Krishna* is the god himself capable of destroying the three worlds, even then he will not surrender to him, since as he says is friendly towards *Arjuna* 'भगवान्देवकीपुत्रो लोकांश्चेन्निहनिष्यति | प्रवदन्नर्जुने सख्यं नाह गच्छेय केशवम्||'. *Dhritarashtra* throws up his hands in desperation telling *Gandhari,* as normally 'fathers do when their sons do not listen to them, that पुत्रास्ते her evil, selfish, jealous and arrogant son is sure to go to perdition not listening to the words of wise men 'अवाग्गान्धारि पुत्रस्ते गच्छत्येष सुदुर्मतिः | ईर्षुदुरात्मा मानी च श्रेयसां वचनातिगः ||'. *Gandhari* as poor and hapless mother tries to pacify *Duryodhana* saying that craving for possessions and refusing to listen elders will surely bring his death in the hands of *Bhima* and at that time he will surely remember his father's words 'ऐशवर्यकाम दुष्टात्मन्वृद्धानां शासनातिग | ऐश्वर्यजीविते हित्वा पितरं मां च बालिप || वर्धयन्दुर्हृदा प्रीतिं मां च शोकेन वर्धयन्| निहतो भीमसेनेन स्मर्तासि वचनं पितुः ||'.

Vyasa tells *Dhritarashtra* that *Krishna* must have showered his grace on him since he is blessed with a counselor like *Sanjaya*, 'प्रियोऽसि राजन्कृष्णस्य धृतराष्ट्र निबोध मे | यस्य ते संजयो दूतो यस्त्वां श्रेयसि योक्ष्यते ||'. *Sanjaya* knows the ancient Consciousness in *Krishna* as well as the supreme essence. If the same is listened with receptivity then he will certainly be delivered from fear. This path on which men of wisdom traverse will surely lead one to the supreme god, detached from and transcending the primordial world of birth and death 'जानात्येष हृषीकेशं पुराणं यच्च वै परम्| शुश्रूषमाणमेकाग्रं मोक्ष्यते महतो भयात्|| एष एकायनः पन्था यैन यान्ति मनीषिणः | तं दृष्ट्वा मृत्युमत्येति महांस्तत्र न सज्जति ||. When *Dhritarashtra* asks him to initiate on that Path, so that restraining his senses, he may attain *Krishna, Sanjaya* informs him that one who has not restrained his senses cannot hope to be enlightened of *Krishna* - 'नाकृतात्मा कृतात्मनं जातु विद्याज्जनार्दनम्| आत्मनस्तु क्रियोपायो नान्यत्रेन्द्रियनिग्रहात्||.. अप्राप्यः केशवो राजन्निन्द्रियैरजितैर्नृभिः | आगमाधिगमाद् योगाद्वशी तत्त्वे प्रसीदति ||.

Even as in *Hastinapur, Duryodhana* is reluctant to any proposals for giving *Panadavs* their share of kingdom, *Yudhishthira* suggests to his brothers, *Virata*, *Drupad* and *Kekayas* that having known *Dhritarashtra's* intention from *Sanjaya* it would be desirable to consult *Krishna,* requesting him to negotiate settlement of their claim so that they may not have to fight *Bhishma*, *Drona* and others. *Krishna* agrees to do whatever is helpful in their interest. *Yudhishthira* remarks that *Dhritarashtra* has undoubtedly become greedy following his son appropriating every thing and not desiring to part even five villages for them. When taking birth in a noble family if one becomes greedy in old age then his sense of discrimination becomes vitiated and looses all sense of shame, which in turn leads to the loss of wealth and possessions 'अप्रदानेन राज्यस्य शान्तिमस्मासु मार्गति | लुब्धः पापेन मनसा चरन्नसममात्मनः ||..गृद्धो राजा धृतराष्ट्रः स्वधर्मं नानुपश्यति | वश्यत्वात्पुत्रगृद्धित्वान्मन्दस्यान्वेति शासनम्||... कुलं जातस्य वृद्धस्य परवित्तेषु गृद्ध्यतः | लोभः प्रज्ञानमाहन्ति प्रज्ञा हन्ति हता ह्रियम्|| ह्रीहर्ता बाधते धर्मं धर्मो हन्ति हतः श्रियम्| श्रीहर्ता पुरुषं हन्ति पुरुषस्याधनं वधः ||'

Yudhishthira wonders the course which righteousness is proceeding seeing a *Kshatriya* kills a *Kshtraiya*, a fish devours a fish and dog eats dog. Indeed war always brings with them destruction of lives. As far as he is concerned, he will follow principles of righteousness and allowing the gods to decide the outcome. It is strange that strong ones do not respect the weak. Neither does he desire to give up his claim to his share nor for the destruction of the family. If by showing humility one gets the desired effect, so be it. Father, King and elders deserve to be respected and even *Dhritarashtra* deserves respect. Being attached to his son, he may not agree to submit to their demands accede the desires of others. 'क्षत्रियः क्षत्रियं हन्ति मत्स्यो मत्स्येन जीवति | श्वा श्वानं हन्ति दाशार्ह पश्य धर्मो यथागतः || युद्धे कृष्ण कलिर्नित्यं प्राणाः सीदन्ति संयुगे | बलं तु नीतिमाधाय युद्धे जयपराजयौ ||...न च त्यक्तुं तदिच्छामो न चेच्छामः कुलक्षयम्| अत्र या प्रणिपातेन शान्तिः सैव गरीयसि ||...पिता राजा च वृद्धश्च सर्वथा मानमर्हति | तस्मान्मान्यश्च धृतराष्ट्रो जनार्दन || पुत्रस्नेहात्बलवान्धृतराष्ट्रस्य माधव | स वशामपद्य प्रणिपातं प्रहास्यति ||'.

Therefore, *Krishna* agrees to go to *Hastinapura* for negotiations if that may bring good for both, without giving up their own just demands. In this manner he may succeed to save both *Kauravas* and the world from destruction 'उभयोरेव वामर्थे यास्यामि कुरुसंसदम्|| शमं तत्र लभेयं चेद्युष्मदर्थमहापयन्| पुण्यं मे सुमहद्राजंश्चरितं स्यान्महाफलम्|| मोचयेयं मृत्युपाशात्संरब्धान्कुरुसृंजयान्| पाण्डवान्धार्तराष्ट्रांश्च सर्वां च पृथिवीमिमाम्||'. *Yudhishthira*, however, says being is afraid that on their account *Krishna* may be put to embarrassment and indignity 'न ममैतन्मतं कृष्ण यत्त्वं यायाः

न हि नः प्रीणयेद्द्रव्यं न देवत्वं कुतः सुखम्। न च सर्वामरैश्वर्यं तव द्रोहेण माधव ||'. *Krishna* कुरूनपति | सुयोधनः सूक्तमपि न करिष्यति ते वचः ||... therefore if he misbehaves even slightly, he will assures him that he is fully aconscious of his evil nature; destroy them completely. Perhaps his going may not be inconsequential. It is possible something good may come of it, at least people may not accuse them for not trying. 'जानाम्येतां महाराज धार्तराष्ट्रस्य पापताम्। अवाच्यास्तु भविष्यामः सर्वलोके महीक्षिताम्|| अथ चेत्ते प्रवर्तन्ते मयि किञ्चिदसाम्प्रतम्। निर्दहेयं कुरून् सर्वानिति मे धीयते मतिः || न जातु गमनं पार्थ भवेत्तत्र निरर्थकम्। अर्थप्राप्तिः कदाचित्स्यादन्ततो वाप्यवाच्यता ||'. *Yudhishthira* fondly hopes that he may return successful 'यत्तुभ्यं रोचते कृष्ण स्वस्ति प्राप्नुहि कौरवान्| कृतार्थं स्वस्तिमन्तं त्वां द्रक्ष्यामि पुनरागतम्|| यद्यद्धर्मेण संयुक्तमुपपद्येद्धितं वचः | तत्तत्केशव भाषेथाः सान्त्वं वा यदि वेतरत्||'.

Krishna remarks to *Yudhishthira* that establishing himself in righteousness, he seems to hope to get through negotiation what not through war. But that is not proper that a *Kshatriya* should beg for his rights. He should fight and win or die on the battle field. They should know that they once had a kingdom which they lost in a game of dice. And now *Duryodhana* will not give it easily 'तव धर्माश्रिता बुद्धिस्तेषां वैराश्रया मतिः | यदयुद्धेन लभ्येत तत्ते बहुमतं भवेत्|| न चैव नैष्ठिकं कर्म क्षत्रियस्य विशाम्पते | आहुराश्रमिणः सर्वे न भैक्ष क्षत्रियश्चरेत्|| जयो वधो वा संग्रामे धात्राऽऽदिष्टः सनातनः | स्वधर्मः क्षत्रियस्यैष कार्पण्यं न प्रशस्यते ||...दुर्योधनो न ह्यलमद्य दातुं जीवन्नयं तन्नृपते कथंचित्| यत्पुरस्तादभवत् समृद्धं द्यूते हृतं पाण्डवमुख्य राज्यम्||'.

Then *Bhima* too cautions him to behave in such manner that would not exasperate *Kauravas*, making it clear further that *Yudhishthira* always praises peace and *Arjuna* too does not desire war 'यथा यथैव शान्तिः स्यात्कुरूणां मधुसूदन | तथा तथैव भाषेथा मा स्म युद्धेन भीषयेः ||... अहमेतद्ब्रवीम्यद्य राजा चैव प्रशंसति | अर्जुनो नैव युद्धार्थी भूयसी हि दयार्जुने ||'. Seeing *Bhima* resigned to fate, *Krishna* bolsters his pride saying that he speaks to his natural instincts, like mountain moving away from its place; therefore he should revert to his earlier inclination born as he is in a great family. The despondency in his mind is not proper for a warrior, because strength and valor which is not put into use is worthless - 'इदं मे महदाश्चर्यं पर्वतस्येव सर्पणम्। यदीदृशं प्रभाषेथा भीमसेनासमं वचः || सदृष्ट्वा स्वानि कर्माणि कुले जन्म च भारत | उत्तिष्ठस्व विषादं मा कृथा वीर स्थिरो भव || न चैतदनुरूपं ते यत्ते ग्लानिररिंदम | यदोजसा न लभते क्षत्रियो न तदश्नुते ||'.

This stings *Bhima's* pride and he bursts out belligerently, saying that he has been understood. He does not like to boast but one who knows him will never speak in this manner. He has neither lost his strength nor has he become despondent. His suggestion for peaceful settlement was only for saving the *Kuru* family 'अन्यथा मां चिकीर्षन्तमन्यथा मन्यसेऽच्युत | प्रणीतभावमत्यन्तं युधि सत्यपराक्रमम्| वेत्सि दाशार्ह सत्त्वं मे दीर्घकालं सहोषितः ||...कथं हि भीमसेनं मां जानन्कश्चन माधव || ब्रूयदप्रतिरूपाणि यथा मा वक्तुमर्हसि ||..न मे सीदन्ति मज्जानो न ममोद्विजते मनः | सर्वलोकादभिक्रुद्धान्न भयं विद्यते मम | किं तु सौहृदमेवैतत्कृपया मधुसूदन | सर्वास्तितिक्षे संक्लेशान्मा स्म नो भरता नशन्||'.

Krishna consoles him saying that he is more powerful than what he himself may be aware. But often well thought and well executed efforts go astray before they conclude. Therefore, one should be integrate one's actions to one purpose. Therefore, one should be integrate one's actions to one purpose, whereby individual actions become attuned to *divine will* bringing success in their enterprise. *Krishna* himself promises that from that very moment he will exert to get the most favourable to them. If *Kauravas* refuse to settle then war would surely be a reality, where he will be *Arjuna's* charioteer 'वेदाहं तव माहात्म्यमुत ते वेद यद्बलम् | उत ते वेद कर्माणि न त्वां परिभवाम्यहम्||..सुमन्त्रितं सुनीतं च न्यायतश्चोपपादितम्| कृतं मानुष्यकं कर्म दैवेनापि विरुध्यते | दैवमप्यकृतं कर्म पौरुषेण विहन्यते |.. श्वोभूते धार्तराष्ट्रस्य समीपं प्राप्य पाण्डव | यतिष्ये प्रशमं कर्तुं युष्मदर्थमहापयन्| शमं चेत्ते करिष्यन्ति ततोऽनन्तं यशो मम | भवतां च कृतः कामस्तेषां च श्रेय उत्तमम्|| ये चेदभिनिवेक्ष्यन्ते नाभ्युपैष्यन्ति मे वचः | कुरवो युद्धमेवात्र घोरं कर्म भविष्यति ||.. अहं हि यन्ता बीभत्सोर्भविता सायुगे मतिः | धनंजयस्यैष कामो न हि युद्धं न कामये ||'.

Arjuna then says that it is not that what one desires will always happen, at the same time nothing should be left undone as undesirable. Therefore, he should act in such manner that settlement with them is assured. In any case whether he desires settlement with *Kauravas* or any other thing, let that happen. Ultimately we desire that alone to happen what *Krishna* desires, that surely being what is good for them - 'नेदिदं भाषितं वाक्यं तथा च न तथैव तत्| न चैतदेव द्रष्टव्यमसाध्यमपि किञ्चन || सम्पाद्यमानं सम्यक्‌च स्यात्कर्म सफलं प्रभो | स तथा कृष्ण वर्तस्व यथा शर्म भवेत्परैः || ...शर्म नः सह वा तेऽस्तु तव वा यच्चिकीर्षितम्| विचार्यमाणो यः कामस्तव कृष्ण स नो गुरुः ||'.

Nakula and *Sahadeva* and *Satyaki* as well commend war with *Kauravas* as the only available solution. *Draupadi* listening *Yudhishthira* speak principles of righteousness at this stage becomes

concerned and unsparing, especially seeing *Bhima* quiet and sullen and *Arjuna* confused and agreeing with his brother. She brings to *Krishna's* attention the indignities which she and *Pandavas* have suffered and *Duryodhana* unrighteously withholding their share and even refusing to part five villages. Therefore, enemy who is not convinced persuasion needs to be punished, only valour justifying 'happiness. Who could be more unfortunate than she, daughter to *Drupada*, sister to *Dritshadyumna*, friend to *Krishna's* friend, wife to *Pandavas*, mother to five brave sons that she has, having delivered her husbands from slavery yet had to go in exile. Though the daughter-in-law of *Bhishma* and *Dhritarashtra*, she was called a slave. When *Duryodhana* remains alive even for a moment what use is *Arjuna's* bow, what use is *Bhima's* strength. Therefore, if *Krishna* has grace on her then let him be angry with *Dhritarashtra's* sons 'भीमसेनं च संशान्त दृष्ट्वा परमदुर्मना | अश्रुपूर्णेक्षणा वाक्यमुवाचेद मनस्विनी ||... अपमादेन राज्यस्य यदि कृष्ण सुयोधनः | सन्धिमिच्छेन्न कर्तव्य तत्र गत्वा कथचन ||..साम्ना दानेन वा कृष्ण ये न शाम्यन्ति शत्रवः | योक्तव्यस्तेपु दण्डः स्याज्जीवितं परिरक्षता ||.. धिक्पार्थस्य धनुष्मत्तां भीमसेनस्य धिग्बलम्| यत्र दुर्योधनः कृष्ण मुहूर्तमपि जीवति ||'.

Draupadi's extreme distress disturbs *Krishna* when she reminds him *Dushasana* humiliating her. Then she declares that if *Bhima* and *Arjuna* are afraid of *Kauravas*, then she will ask her father and brother and her five sons under the leadership of *Abhimanyu*. She will have no peace till she sees *Dushasana's* hands severed from his body. When for thirteen years she has kept the fire of vengeance burning, here are husbands speaking of righteousness 'अयं ते पुण्डरीकाक्ष दुःशासनकरोद्धृतः | स्मर्तव्यः सर्वकार्येपु परेपां संधिमिच्छता || यदि भीमार्जुनौ कृष्ण कृपणौ संधिकामुकौ | पिता मे योत्स्यते वृद्धः सह पुत्रैर्महारथैः || पञ्च चैव महावीर्याः पुत्रा मे मधुसूदन | अभिमन्युं पुरस्कृत्य योत्स्यन्ते कुरुभिः सह || दुःशासनभुजं श्यामं संछिन्नं पांसुगुण्ठितम्| यद्यहं तु न पश्यामि का शान्तिर्हृदयस्य मे || त्रयोदश हि वर्षाणि प्रतीक्षन्त्या गतानि मे | विधाय हृदयं मन्युं प्रदीप्तमिव पावकम्||'.

Hearing her desperation, *Krishna* assures her his unconditional support, saying that those on whom she had become angry, their wives and relatives will like-wise will roll in lamentation. *Dhritarshtra's* sons bsuccumbing to *Time* will surely roll becoming food for dogs and wolves. 'एव ता भीरु रोत्स्यन्ति निहतज्ञातिवान्धवाः | हतमित्रा हतबला येपां क्रुद्धासि भामिनि || अहं च तत्करिष्यामि भीमार्जुनयमैः सह | युधिष्ठिरनियोगेन दैवच्च विधिनिर्मितात्|| धार्तराष्ट्राः कालपक्वा न चेच्छृण्वन्ति मे वचः | शेष्यन्ते निहता भूमौ श्वशृगालादनीकृताः ||'. Then from his position as human being, he counsels every one to perform their duties, with full confidence that *divine intent* and *purpose* will finally succeed.

Krishna assures them that he will do as he has spoken, so that the danger may be averted and both may live in peace. He is fully conscious the responsibility of war or peace has rested in his hands. But no success would come howsoever the field was good unless proper rains fall. The great souls have wisely proclaimed that the proper medium for achieving good of the world should depend on divine grace and human effort. Therefore, even he will do what ever is humanly possible for coming to a settlement but he cannot change what has been already decided by दैव the *divine will* 'एवमेतन्महाबाहो यथा वदसि पाण्डव | पाण्डवाना कुरूणां च प्रतिपत्स्यं निरामयम्|| सर्वं त्विदं ममायत्त बीभत्सो कर्मणोर्द्वयोः | क्षेत्रं हि रसवत्शुद्धं कर्मणैवोपपादितम्|| ऋते वर्षान्न कौन्तेय जातु निर्वर्तयेत्|...तदिदं निश्चितं बुद्ध्या पूर्वैरपि महात्मभिः || दैवं च मानुपं चैव संयुक्त लोककारणम्| अहं हि तत् करिष्यामि परं पुरुषाकारतः || दैव तु न मया शक्य कर्म कर्तु कथंचन |'.

This is an important statement which brings out his *human* role in relation to his role in fulfillment the *divine intent* and *purpose*. While every creation is undoubted manifestation of the *divine essence*, importance of every manifestation depends upon the extent of infusion of the *essence* in the manifested beings, whether partially or fully, in degrees and gradation, whether in the conscious *form* or not. *Krishna* makes a distinction between divine *will* and human *enterprise*, striking a balance between *divine will* - दैव and *human enterprise* पुरुषार्थ, bringing to the attention the ancient saying that any action beneficial to the world is dependent on both *divine will* as well as *human enterprise* - 'तदिद निश्चित बुद्ध्या पूर्वैरपि महात्माभि: | दैवं च मानुपं चैव सयुक्तं लोककारणम्||'. By highlighting the fact that even he, established as he is in human form, cannot change what has been decided and ordained as दैव or the *divine will*, being constrained and obliged by the attributes (गुण) and inclination (स्वभाव) born of nature. Therefore, though both he and

Arjuna are the ancient seers born in human form, it is only he who is fully conscious of the divine intent and purpose, whereas *Arjuna* is not. Therefore, he will fulfill his assignment to the best of his ability depending upon his *divine will* as well as his *human enterprise* This explains the various actions performed in their temporal life established as they were in human forms, in spite of the enlightenment of the divine essence within.

The significance of *Krishna's* visit should be noted. Though he goes as human messenger interested in *Pandavas,* he is fully conscious of the *divine intent* and *purpose* for which he has taken descent. As a human being, a statesman respected in the lands, he counsels *Duryodhana* about the desirability of upholding the ancient *Kshtra* values to uphold the world order and yet as a practical politician does not rule out the possibility of using force to subdue their disinclination. As the *divine essence*, he attempts to remove their obscurity when they become intemperate, rude and arrogant by emphasizing his divine role in human affairs by displaying his resplendence and impressing with awe and shock to them.

Vyasa eagerly records that the moment *Krishna* stepped on his journey darkness recedes and the first radiant rays illumine the horizon - 'ततो व्यपेततमसि सूर्ये विमलदभ्रवते | मैत्रे मुहूर्ते सम्प्राप्ते मृदुर्चिषि दिवाकरे ||. Then after performing rites and rituals enjoined before one embarks on an auspicious mission, he enters *Hastinapur* along with *Satyaki* with peace in his heart and vigor in his armour because 'न च शत्रुर्वज्ञेयो दुर्बलोऽपि बलीयसा ||. Therefore, even as he tells *Arjuna*, 'धर्म्यमर्हितं चैव कुरूणां यदनामयम्| एष यास्यामि राजन धृतराष्ट्रमभीप्सया ||' he mounts the chariot endowed with his conch, discus and mace, 'रथ आरोप्यतां शङ्खचक्र च गदया सह | उपसंगाश्च शक्त्यश्च सर्वप्रहरणानि च ||'. *Divine beings* in Hindu mythology are not only kind and compassionate, possessed with hands that bless and protect but also stern and severe with arms fully equipped with frightful weapons of destruction.

When *Krishna's* chariot passes through the different regions towards *Hastinapur*, swift like a flying vehicle, resplendent like Sun, serene like the moon and roaring like the fire when dissolution of the worlds is imply, 'तं दीप्तमिव कालाग्निमाकाशगमिवाशुगम्| सूर्यचन्द्रपाकाशाभ्या चक्राभ्या समलंकृतम्||', he receives mixed reception, seers offer him adoration requesting permission to remain present under the leadership or Narada to be present when he counsels the evil Kauravas for negotiating the peace and be enlightened with the matters of righteousness and enterprise, 'धर्मार्थसहिता वाचः श्रोतुमिच्छाम माधव || त्वयोच्यमानाः कुरुषु राजमध्ये परंतप |..तव वाक्यानि दिव्यानि यथा तेषां च माधव || श्रोतुमिच्छाम गोविन्द सत्यानि च हितानि च |' when he counsels the evil *Kauravas* for negotiating the peace.

The passage to good intentions are, however, paved with the many difficulties and sharp as edge of a razor and difficult to tread is the path, so the sages have declared and *Krishna* is faced with lightening, thunder without breeze and rains pouring without clouds 'अनभ्रेऽशनिनिर्घोषः सविद्युत्समजायत | अन्वगेव च पर्जन्यः प्रावर्षद्विघने भृशम्||'. The signs are ominous and significant with *divine intent* and *purpose* appearing as stern and inexorable, which few become aware while the rest unenlightened of the divine effulgence 'तमःसंवृतमप्यासीत्सर्वं जगदिदं तथा | न दिशो नादिशो राजन्प्रज्ञायन्ते स्म रेणुना ||'. Rivers changed their course and the earth started trembling, the space was obscured with no knowledge of the quarters and directions 'तमःसंवृतमप्यासीत्सर्वं जगदिदं तथा | न दिशो नादिशो राजन्प्रज्ञायन्ते स्म रेणुना ||'.

While such turbulent stance are observed in the case of temporal persons, they are not so for one who is spiritually endowed. *Krishna* was one who was spiritually enlightened to his *divine essence* and conscious of the *divine intent* and *purpose* for which he has come to establish. Therefore, wherever he goes, there conditions become favourably inclined. Therefore poets says that wherever *Krishna* traveled there cool breeze was seen moving smoothly and all auspicious signs were seen 'यत्र यत्र च वार्ष्णेयो वर्तते पथि भारत | तत्र तत्र सुखो वायुः सर्वं चासीत्प्रदक्षिणम्|| ववर्ष पुष्पवर्षं च कमलानि च भूरिशः | समश्च पन्था निर्दुःखो व्यपेतकुशकण्टकः ||'.

When *Dhritarashtra* comes to know of *Krishna's* arrival in *Hastinapur*, he reacts like one completely influenced by temporal considerations. Thrilled at the prospect of his visit, he tells

Duryodhana that *Krishna* is coming to negotiate on behalf of *Pandavas*, 'उपायास्यति दाशार्हः पाण्डवार्थे पराक्रमी |', even though he speaks of him as 'स मान्यतां नरश्रेष्ठः स हि धर्मः सनातनः | पूजितो हि सुखाय स्यादसुखः स्यादपूजितः ||', his devious mind completely attached to his son, suggests that the opportunity should be used to influence *Krishna's* mind for welfare of his own sons - 'स चेत्तुष्यति दाशार्ह उपचारैररिंदम | कृष्णात्सर्वानभिप्रयान्प्राप्स्यामः सर्वराजसु ||. He imagines that if duly honoured, he may become well disposed to them and better cooperation could be expected from other rulers. He asks his son to make elaborate arrangement which would be agreeable to him or as would *Bhishma* suggests - 'स मान्यतां नरश्रेष्ठः स हि धर्मः सनातनः | पूजितो हि सुखाय स्यादसुखः स्यादपूजितः ||... यथा प्रीतिर्महाबाहो त्वयि जायेत तस्य वै | तथा कुरुष्व गान्धारे कथं वा भीष्म मन्यसे ||'.

Bhishma and others commend this step as the most appropriate thing to do and accordingly arrangements are made for *Krishna's* stay in *Dushasana's* house since it was more opulent than *Duryodhana's* house. *Vidura*, however, is not happy knowing the intention with *Dhritarashtra* changing his position like moon or the sea waves - 'लेखा शशिनि भाः सूर्ये महोर्मिरिव सागरे | धर्मस्त्वयि तथा राजस्त्वयि तथा राजन्निति व्यवसितः प्रजाः ||'. He advices *Dhritarashtra* to be circumspect and simple in his conduct because unwise actions might spoil the benefit which his sons may otherwise acquire 'आर्जवं प्रतिपद्यस्व मा बाल्याद्बहु नीनशः | राजन् पुत्रांश्च पौत्रांश्च सुहृदश्चैव सुप्रियान्||'. Their reluctance to give even five villages to *Pandavas* while showering wealth and possessions on *Krishna* make him makes them think that they are against any settlement. Only righteousness pleases him and wealth would not separate him from *Arjuna* 'न च वित्तेन शक्योऽसौ नोद्यमेन न गर्हया | अन्यो धनंजयात्कर्तुमेतत्तत्त्वं ब्रवीमि ते ||'. In fact it would be surprising if he accepts any thing more than water for drinking and washing his feet. *Vidura* reminds *Dhritarashtra* that *Pandavas* beings like his own sons, he should treat them accordingly.

Duryodhana picks up *Vidura's* one solitary statement that *Krishna* is closer to *Pandavas*, 'यदाह विदुरः कृष्णे सर्वं तत्सत्यमुच्यते | अनुरक्तो ह्यसंहार्यः पार्थान्प्रति जनार्दनः ||' and therefore though *Krishna* is respected in all the three worlds and deserve special honour, 'स हि पूज्यतमो लोके कृष्णः पृथुलोचनः | त्रयाणामपि लोकानां विदितं मम सर्वथा ||' this is not the time for the same, since it may give him impression that they are frightened of him 'देशः कालस्तथायुक्तो न हि नार्हति केशवः | मंस्यत्यधोक्षजो राजन्भयादर्चति मामिति ||'. *Bhishma* tells *Dhritarashtra* that *Krishna* is not bothered with any honour and excessive display may create the opposite effect. At the same time he agrees that *Krishna* can not to be treated lightly. He is sure to speak what is beneficial to all without any reservation, there allow him to his mind.

Duryodhana cautions *Bhisma* that as long as he is alive, he will not share wealth with *Pandavas*, not hesitating to take *Krishna*, their sole supporter, whom in any case does not recognize as divine person, a prisoner and force *Yadavas* and *Pandavas* to concede his desire 'न पर्याप्तोऽस्ति यद्राजञ्श्रियं निष्केवलामहम्| तैः सहेमामुपाश्नीयां यावज्जीवं पितामह || इदं तु सुमहत्कार्यं श्रुणु मे यत्समर्थितम्| परायणं पाण्डवानां नियच्छामि जनार्दनम्|| तस्मिन्बद्धे भविष्यन्ति वृष्णयः पृथिवी तथा | पाण्डवाश्च विधेया मे स च प्रातर्रहिष्यति ||'. If they have any other way for having his purpose served they may speak. *Dhritarashtra* and others sink in despondency listening to his arrogant words. Aghast at the preposterous suggestion they ask him how can he think of taking prisoner one who has come as a messenger, a relative and dear one. Lamenting that *Duryodhana* has surely come to destroy the family, *Bhishma* leaves the assembly.

When *Krishna* enters *Hastinapur* he is received by *Kauravas* with great respect. After a brief visit to *Dhritarashtra*, *Bhishma* and *Drona* he goes to *Vidura's* residence where he meets *Kunti*. She relates to him her sons' unhappy experiences, concluding that she does not regret the sufferings as much as the humiliation which *Draupadi* had to face. Therefore, he should consider doing what is of their interest 'न दुःखं राज्यहरणं न च द्यूते पराजयः | प्रव्राजनं तु पुत्राणां न मे तद्दुःखकारणम्|| यत्तु सा बृहती श्यामा एकवस्त्रा सभा गता | अश्रुणोत्परुषा वाचः किं नु दुःखतरं ततः ||.. यद्यदत्तेषां महाबाहो पथ्यं स्यान्मधुसूदन | यथा यथा त्वं मन्येथाः कुर्याः कृष्ण तथा तथा ||'.

After consoling *Kunti*, *Krishna* goes to *Duryodhana* and finds him sitting along with *Karna*, *Shakuni* and *Dushasana*. They welcome with honour and offer gifts and food. When *Krishna* declines, *Duryodhana* voices his concern about his refusal when he has come as their guest and a well wisher.

Krishna smilingly points out the custom which prohibits a negotiator to accept gifts and food only after the purpose for which he has come, is fulfilled, 'कृनार्था भुञ्जनं दूरनाः पूजां चैव ह | कृनार्थं मा सहामायत्यं समार्चिर्ष्यास्मि भारन ||'. Repulsed in this manner *Duryodhana* protests that when they have neither enmity nor any disagreement with him he should not be unfair to them 'वैरं नो नास्ति भवना गोविन्द न च विग्रहः | स भावान प्रसमीक्ष्यैनन्नेदृशं वक्तुमर्हसि ||'. Therefore, whether the mission succeeds or not, *Kauravas* would continue to offer him their respects. ' *Krishna* replies that he has no desires, anger, hatred, selfishness nor any ulterior motive. One takes food either out of love or in time of distress; neither have they shown love towards him nor is he in distress 'नाह कामान्न संरम्भान द्वेपान्नर्थकारणात्| न हेतुवदाल्लंभद्वा धर्मं जह्यां कथंचन || सम्प्रीतिभोज्यान्यन्नानि आपद्भोज्यानि वा पुनः | न च सम्प्रियसे राजनन चैवाद्गना वयम्||'. From childhood *Pandavas* have suffered, though they are of noble conduct and righteousness. Whoever hates them hates him and whoever is agreeable towards them is also agreeable to him 'अकस्माच्चैव पार्थानां द्वेपणं नोपपद्यते | धर्मे स्थिताः पाण्डवेयाः कस्मार्तिक वक्तुर्हसि || यस्तानद्वेष्टि स मा द्वेष्टि यस्तानन्नु स मामनु | एकात्म्य मा गत विद्धि पाण्डवैर्धर्मचारिभिः ||'. Food and pleasure becomes vitiated by evil intentions 'द्विषदन्न न भोक्तव्य द्विषन्न नैव भोजयेत्| पाण्डवार्नाद्विपसे राजन् मम पाणाः हि पाण्डवाः || सर्वमेतन्न भोक्तव्यमन्नं दुष्टाभिसंहितम्| क्षत्तुरेकस्य भोक्तव्यानि मे धीयते मतिः ||'. Assuring them that he will accept his hospitality after the completion of the negotiations he returns to *Vidura's* residence to take food only from *Vidura. Bhishma, Drona, Karna* and *Bahlika* follow him to *Vidura's* residence offering their gifts and residence for him to stay, when he confides in them that they should return their homes, since their very intention has given him satisfaction.

Vidura tries his utmost to dissuade *Krishna* from going to *Kaurava's* court, since he fears him being insulted by evil-minded *Kauravas* even when he speaks words for his welfare. Being puffed with the strength of his army, and being suspicious of Krishna's intentions, he may not listen to even his good counsel - 'नेदं सम्यग्व्यवसितं केशवागमनं तव || धर्मशास्त्रातिगो मूढो दुरात्मा प्रगह गतः | अनेय श्रेयसा मन्दो धार्तराष्ट्रो जनार्दन || कामात्मा प्राज्ञमानी च मित्रध्रुकसर्वशङ्कितः | अकर्ता चाकृतज्ञश्च त्यक्तधर्मा प्रियानृत. ||...त्वयोच्यमानः श्रेयोऽपि सम्भान्न ग्रहीष्यति ||...बल बलवदप्यस्य यदि वक्ष्यसि माधव | त्वय्यस्य महती शङ्का न करिष्यति ते वचः ||'. *Krishna*, however tells him that he is fully aware of the evil mind of the *Kauravas*, it is for the same reason that he has come for negotiations. 'दौरात्म्य धार्तराष्ट्रस्य क्षत्रियाणां च वैरनम्| सर्वमेतदह जानामि क्षत्तः प्राप्तोऽद्य कौरवान्||...ज्ञातीनां हि मिथो भेदे यन्मित्र नाभिपद्यते | सर्वयत्नेन माध्यस्थ न तन्मित्र विदुर्बुधा ||'. Therefore, he desires to make a final attempt because of the high reputation which *Kuru* family is held in the comity of nations and lest people may say that even after being able *Krishna* did not prevent them from going to destructon. He has come to conciliate the two and will only then he will not be blamed. If *Duryodhana* does not listen to his advice then he will surely be the unfortunate one. Of one the other hand keeping in mind the welfare of the *Pandavas* he comes to any settlement then he will consider having performed a good deed which will also save *Kauravas* from extermination. If he does not succeed then becoming angry he will destroy them with all their associates like angry lion killing the animals. - 'न मा ब्रूयुरधर्मिष्ठा मूढा ह्यसुहृदस्तथा | शक्तो नावारयत्कृष्णः संरब्धान्कुरुपाण्डवान्|| उभयोः साधयन्नर्थमहमागत इत्युत | तत्र यत्नमहं कृत्वा गच्छेयं नृष्ववाच्यताम्| मम धर्मार्थयुक्तं हि श्रुत्वा वाक्यमनामयम्| न चेदादास्यते बालो दिष्टस्य वशमेष्यति || अहापयन पाण्डवार्थ यथावच्छम कुरूणां यदि चाचरेयम्| पुण्य च मे स्याच्चरित महात्मन्मुच्येरंश्च कुरवो मृत्युपाशात्||... न चापि मम पर्याप्ता सहिताः सर्वपार्थिवाः. क्रुद्धस्य प्रमुखे स्थातु सिहस्येवेतरे मृगाः ||'. *Vidura* was so much engrossed in listening *Krishna's* illuminating and extensive exposition of the mystical truths concealed in धर्म, righteousness, अर्थ, enterprise and काम, human desires words that they did not realize when the night passed and day dawned 'धर्मार्थकामयुक्ताश्च विचित्रार्थपदाक्षराः | शृण्वतो विविधा वाचो विदुरस्य महात्मनः || कथाभिरनुरूपाभिः कृष्णस्यामिततेजसः | अकामस्येव कृष्णस्य सा व्यतीताय शर्वरी ||'.

When *Krishna* arrives in the *Kaurava's* court all rise respectfully. He suggests that *Kauravas* and *Pandavas* may live in peace with each other so that bloodshed among *Kshatriyas* may be averted. He requests *Dhritarashtra* to restrain his impetuous sons while he himself will restrain *Pandavas*, so that together they become invincible against strangers 'कृपानुकम्पा कारुण्यमानृशंस्य च भारत | तथाऽऽर्जव क्षमासत्य कुरुष्वेतद्विशिष्यते || तस्मिन्नेवंविधे राजन्कुले महति तिष्ठति | त्वन्निमित्त विशेषेण नेह युक्तमसाम्प्रतम्||...ते पुत्रास्तव कौरव्य दुर्योधनपुरोगमाः | धर्मार्थौ पृष्ठतः कृत्वा प्रचरन्ति नृशंसवत्||...सेयमापन्महाघोरा कुरुष्वेव समुत्थिता | उपेक्षमाणा कौरव्य पृथिवी घातयिष्यति || ...त्वय्यधीनः शमो राजन्मयि चैव विशाम्पते | पुत्रान् स्थापय कौरव्य स्थापयिष्याम्यहं परान्|| लोकस्येश्वरता भूयः शत्रुभिश्चाप्यधृष्यताम्| प्राप्स्यसि त्वामभिमन्त्र सहितः कुरुपाण्डवैः ||'. While every one

agrees with *Krishna* no one dares to come forward to speak to *Duryodhana*. Wise men who were present counsel *Duryodhana* to follow righteous conduct, *Parashurama* reminding him that when creator has himself aligned with *Arjuna* who can think of defeating them 'सुमहाच्चापि तत्कर्म नरनारायणे कृतं पुरा | तौ गुणैः सुबाहुभिः श्रेष्ठौ नारायणोऽभवत्|| तस्माद् यावदधनुःश्रेष्ठं गाण्डीवमस्त्रं न युज्यते | तावत्त्वं मानमुत्सृज्य गच्छ राजन्धनंजयम्|| निर्मातासर्वलोकानामीश्वरः सर्वकर्मवित्| यस्य नारायणो बन्धुरर्जुनो दुःसहो युधि ||' *Kanva* cautions him that enmity is not rewarding, negotiations alone saving his family 'तदलं विरोधेन शमं गच्छ नृपात्मज | वासुदेवेन तीर्थेन कुलं रक्षितुमर्हसि || प्रत्यक्षदर्शी सर्वस्य नारदोऽयं महातपाः | माहात्म्यस्य तदा विष्णोः सोऽयं चक्रगदाधरः ||'.

Duryodhana is adamant even when *Vyasa*, *Narada*, *Vishvamitra* and other sages advise saying 'अक्षयश्चाव्ययश्चैव ब्रह्मा लोकपितामहः | तथैव भगवन्तौ तौ नरनारायणवृषी ||..अजय्यश्चाव्याश्चैव शाश्वतः प्रभुरीश्वरः || निमित्तमरणाश्चान्ये चन्द्रसूर्यौ मही जलम्| वायुरग्निस्तथाऽऽकाशं ग्रहास्तारागणास्तथा || ते च क्षयन्ति जगतो हित्वा लोकत्रयं सदा | क्षयं गच्छन्ति वै सर्वे सृज्यन्ते च पुनः पुनः ||'. Therefore, he should live together with *Pandavas* and rule this earth, not considering himself more powerful than others, because there are more powerful than the powerful ones 'स भवान्धर्मपुत्रेण शमं कर्तुमिहार्हति | पाण्डवाः कुरवश्चैव पालयन्तु वसुन्धराम्|| बलवानहमित्येव न मन्तव्यं सुयोधन | बलवन्तो बलिभ्यो हि दृश्यन्ते पुरुषर्षभ || न बलंबलिनां मध्ये बलं भवति कौरव | बलवन्तो हि ते सर्वे पाण्डवा देवविक्रमाः ||'. Therefore, nothing good will come of this confrontation. Make peace with *Pandavas* and with *Krishna's* help should save his family. *Narada* who is enlightened seer knows Krishna is none other than *Vishnu*. But *Duryodhana* is not inclined remaining adamant and obstinate bursting out audaciously that if his actions are as *the divinity* willed, why then do they grumble - 'यथैवेश्वरसृष्टोऽस्मि यद्भावि या च मे गतिः | तथा महर्षे वर्तामि किं प्रलापः करिष्यति ||'. *Narada* regretfully remarks that he who listens to the advice from a well-wisher without having any self interest is indeed rare because in times of trouble only a well-wisher stand by, not even brothers. But Duryodhana seems to be reluctant to listen to good advice or else there would be great calamity 'दुर्लभो वै सुहृच्छ्रोता दुर्लभश्च हितः सुहृत्| तिष्ठते हि सुहृद्यत्र न बन्धुस्तत्र तिष्ठति || श्रोतव्यमपि पश्यामि सुहृदां कुरुनन्दन | न कर्तव्यश्च निर्बन्धो हि सुदारुणः ||'.

Dhritarashtra admits lamely that though what they speak is undoubtedly true he has no control over his son nor does he listen to him - 'भगवान्नेवमेवैतद्यथा वदसि नारद | इच्छामि चाहमप्येवं न त्वीशो भगवन्नहम्|| स्वर्ग्यं लोक्यं च मसात्थ धर्म्यं न्याय्यं च केशव || न त्वहं स्ववशस्तात क्रियमाणं न मे प्रियम्| अङ्गं दुर्योधनं कृष्ण मन्दं शास्त्रातिगं मम | अनुनेतुं महाबाहो यतस्व पुरुषोत्तम || न शृणोति महाबाहो वचनं साधुभाषितम्|| गान्धार्यश्च हृषीकेश विदुरस्य च धीमतः | अन्येषां चैव सुहृदां भीष्मादीनां हितैषिणाम्||'. Finally *Krishna* too counsels *Duryodhana* not to be the cause of the destruction of his family and friends but to enjoy wealth as it comes, listening to the words of the well-wishers living life in peace and bright future 'शमे शर्म भवेत्तात सर्वस्य जगतस्तथा | ह्रीमानसि कुले जातः श्रुतवाननृशंसवान्| तिष्ठ तात पितुः शास्त्रे मातुश्च भरतर्षभ ||.. कामार्थौ लिप्समानस्तु धर्ममेवादितश्चरेत्| न हि धर्मादपैत्यर्थः कामो वापि कदाचन ||..पश्य पुत्रांस्तथा भ्रातॄञ्ज्ञातीन्सम्बन्धिनस्तथा | त्वत्कृते न विनश्येयुर्भरतसत्तमाः || त्वामेव स्थापयिष्यन्ति यौवराज्ये महारथाः | महाराज्येऽपि पितरं धृतराष्ट्रं जनेश्वरम्|| मा तात श्रियमायान्तीमवमंस्थाः समुपस्थिताम्| अर्धं प्रदाय पार्थेभ्यो महतीं श्रियमाप्स्यसि || पाण्डवैः संशमं कृत्वा च सुहृदां वचः | सम्प्रीयमाणो मित्रैश्च चिरं भद्राण्यवाप्स्यसि ||'.

Krishna's words leave no impression on his mind obscured by the influence of *asuras*. He refuses to heed any advice to save *Kuru* family from destruction and humiliation, though he is assured that given their half share, *Pandavas* will agree him as their Prince and *Dhritarashtra* as their king. Both *Bhishma* and *Drona* request him to reconsider and do what is right, *Vidura* intervenes with grief writ large on his face, saying that they are not worried about him as much as they worry about aged father and mother, 'दुर्योधन न शोचामि त्वामहं भरतर्षभ | इमौ तु वृद्धौ शोचामि गान्धारीं पितरं च ते ||'.

Displeased by *Duryodhana's* behaviour *Bhishma* remarks to him that as long as *Krishna* and *Arjuna* are not ready for a battle, as long as *Gandeeva* is still in *Arjuna's* hand, as long as *Dhyuma* does not offer warriors of enemy as sacrifice, as long as *Yudhishthira* does not cast angry look on his armies, one should see that both sides come to amicable settlement. He desires that *Dhritarashtra* should show his affection to *Pandavas*, seeing which all rulers would certainly show their satisfaction, and the king should declare that dispute between *Pandavas* and *Kauravas* is settled amicably and *Duryodhana* and *Yudhishthira* should live in brotherly affection- 'यावत्कृष्णावसंनद्धौ यावत्तिष्ठति गाण्डीवम्| यावद्धौम्यो न मेधाग्नौ जुहोतीह द्विषद्बलम्|| यावन्न प्रेक्षते क्रुद्धः सेनां तव युधिष्ठिरः | ह्रीनिषेवो महेष्वासस्तावच्छाम्यतु वैशसम्||..दृष्ट्वा त्वां पाण्डवैर्वीरैर्भ्रातृभिः सह संगतम्| यवदानन्दजाश्रूणि

प्रमुञ्चन्तु नराधिपाः || घुष्यतां राजधानीषु सर्वसम्पन्महीक्षिताम्| पृथिवी भ्रातृभावेन भुज्यतां विज्वरो भव ||'.

Unconvinced and unrepentant, *Duryodhana* turns to *Krishna* and speaks spiritedly that he should think twice before he speaks to him in this manner, speaking as if he alone responsible for every thing. He does not see any wrong in what he says or has done. It is not his fault if *Yudhishthira* agreed to play the game of dice and lost. And having received all their wealth and loose again and having to go in exile was that his fault? Not even gods can hope to win defeating *Bhishma*, *Drona* and *Karna* what to speak of the *Pandavas*, who dieing will surely go to heaven. His father had given management of the Kingdom to him many years earlier and therefore, *Pandavas* will not have any share as long as he is alive. In fact half of the kingdom given earlier was improper. Therefore, they should not expect even to receive even as much land as would stand on the tip of a needle 'प्रसमीक्ष्य भवानेनदवक्तुमर्हति केशव | मामेव हि विशेषेण विभाष्य परिगर्हसे ||..न चाहं लक्षये कंचिद्व्यभिचारमिहात्मनः | अथ सर्वे भवन्तो मां विद्विषन्ति सराजकाः || न चाहं कंचिदत्यर्थमपराधमरिंदम | विचिन्तयन्प्रपश्यामि सुसूक्ष्ममपि केशव || प्रियाभ्युपगते द्यूते पाण्डवा मधुसूदन | जिताः शकुनिना राज्यं तत्र किं मम दुष्कृतम्|| यत्पुनर्द्रविणं किंचित्तत्राजियन्त पाण्डवाः | तेभ्य एवाभ्यनुज्ञातं तत्तथा मधुसूदन || अपराधो न चास्माकं यत्ते द्यूते पराजिताः | अजेया जयतां श्रेष्ठ पार्थाः प्रव्राजिता वनम्|| ..न च तं कृष्ण पश्यामि क्षत्रधर्म मनुष्ठितम्| उत्साहेन युधा जेतुं यो नः शत्रुनिबर्हण || न हि भीष्मकृपद्रोणाः सकर्णा मधुसूदन | देवैरपि युधा जेतुं शक्याः किमुत पाण्डवैः ||..कश्च जातु कुले जातः क्षत्रधर्मेण वर्तयन्| भयाद् वृत्तिं समीक्ष्यैवं प्रणमेदिह कर्हिचित्||..राज्यांशश्चाप्यनुज्ञातो यो मे पित्रा पुराभवत्| न स लभ्यः पुनर्जातु मयि जीवति केशव || यावच्च राजा ध्रियते धृतराष्ट्रो जनार्दन | न्यस्तशस्त्रा वयं ते वाप्युपजीवाम माधव | अप्रदेयं पुरा दत्तं राज्यं परवतो मम || अज्ञानाद्वा भयाद्वापि मयि बाले जनार्दन | न तदद्य पुनर्लभ्यं पाण्डवैर्वृष्णिनन्दन || ध्रियमाणे महाबाहो मयि सम्प्रति केशव | यावद्धि तीक्ष्णया सूच्या विध्येदग्रेण केशव | तावदप्यपरित्याज्या भूमेर्नः पाण्डवान्प्रति ||'.

Duryodhana's long oration shows him as a proud warrior neither given to realize one's faults nor accept them, fashioned in the form of anti-hero, conscious of his temporal strength and given to justify his unreasonable and unjustifiable actions, with imprudent and perverted understanding of धर्म .Listening to his stubborn and audacious speech, *Krishna* momentarily looses his temper, assuring him harshly and in desperation that his wish would surely be fulfilled and he will not live long but lay dead on the battle field. If he thinks that he has not been done any harm to *Panadvas* he will narrate them to the rulers gathered here - 'लप्स्यसे वीरशयनं काममेतदवाप्स्यसि | स्थिरो भव सहामात्यो विमर्दो भविता महान्|| यच्चैवं मन्यसे मूढ न मे कश्चिद्व्यतिक्रमः | पाण्डवेष्विति तत्सर्वं निबोधत नराधिपः ||'.

Then *Krishna* recounts all the evil deeds which have caused irreparable sufferings to *Pandavas*, concluding his narration with the statement that *Duryodhana* is verily one who having performed cruel actions like an uncultured person now behaves as if he is not guilty of all allegations. In spite of the various advice from his elders and well wishers he shows no sign of remorse and repentance. Surely he cannot now become partner in progress, continuing to traverse the unrighteous path 'कृत्वा बहून्यकार्याणि पाण्डवेषु नृशंसवत्| मिथ्यावृत्तिरनार्यः सन्नद्य विप्रतिपद्यसे || मातापितृभ्यां भीष्मेण द्रोणेन विदुरेण च | शाम्येति मुहुरुक्तोऽसि न च शाम्यसि पार्थिव || न शर्म प्राप्स्यसे राजन्नुत्क्रम्य सुहृदां वचः | अधर्म्यमयशस्यं च क्रियते पार्थिव त्वया ||'.

Hearing these strong words spoken by *Krishna*, *Dushasana* intervenes angrily and tells *Duryodhana* that he does not seem to have come for settlement but to seize *Duryodhana, Dushasana and Karna* and hand them over to *Pandavas* - 'न चेत्संधास्यसे राजन्स्वेन कामेन पाण्डवैः | बद्ध्वा किल त्वां दास्यन्ति कुन्तिपुत्राय कौरवाः || वैकर्तनं त्वां च मां च त्रीनेतान्मनुजर्षभ | पाण्डवेभ्यः प्रदास्यन्ति भीष्मो द्रोणः पिता च ते ||'. When *Duryodhana* hears this he becomes extremely angry and agitated, leaving the hall with his companions furiously like a wounded serpent in utter disrespect to the assembled noblemen 'भ्रातुरेतद्वचः श्रुत्वा धार्तराष्ट्रः सुयोधनः | क्रुद्धः प्रातिष्ठतोत्थाय महानाग इव श्वसन्|| सर्वा नेताननादृत्य दुर्मतिर्निरपत्रपः | अशिष्टवदमर्यादो मानी मान्यावमानिता ||'.

Bhishma becomes irritated by *Duryodhana's* arrogant behaviour saying that he is performing unrighteous acts to attain wealth, concluding that verily this is due to *Time* becoming ripe for destruction of *Kshatriyas* 'न चेत्संधास्यसे राजन्स्वेन कामेन पाण्डवैः | बद्ध्वा किल त्वां दास्यन्ति कुन्तिपुत्राय कौरवाः ||. . . दुरात्मा राजपुत्रोऽयं धार्तराष्ट्रोऽनुपायकृत्| मिथ्याभिमानी राज्यस्य क्रोधलोभवशानुगः || कालपक्वमिदं मन्ये सर्वं क्षत्रं जनार्दन | सर्वे ह्यनुसृता मोहात्पार्थिवाः सह मन्त्रिभिः ||'. *Krishna* was unsparing telling *Kauarva* elders that they themselves were responsible in giving *Duryodhana* vast powers without restraining him periodically. Even *Ugrasen* had had regretted in his old age giving power to his evil son *Kamsa*, who considering himself king, brought great suffering to his family and

ribe. *Krishna* had to kill him and deliver the populace from his evil rule. Even as with his removal the ommunity prospered even so abandoning *Duryodhana Kuru* family and the whole *kshatriya* ommunity would be saved 'सर्वेषां कुरुवृद्धानां महानयमतिक्रमः | प्रसह्य मन्दमैश्वर्ये न नियच्छत यन्नृपम्||.. भोजराजस्य वृद्धस्य दुराचारो ह्यनात्मवान्| जीवितः पितुरैश्वर्यं हत्वा मृत्युवशं गतः ||...कंसमेकं परित्यज्य कुलार्थे सर्वयादवाः | सम्भूय सुखमेधन्ते भारतान्धकवृष्णयः || तथा दुर्योधनं कर्णं शकुनिं चापि सौबलम्| बद्ध्वा दुःशासनं चापि पाण्डवेभ्यः प्रयच्छत || त्यजेत्कुलार्थे पुरुषं ग्रामस्यार्थे कुलं त्यजेत्| ग्रामं जनपदस्यार्थे आत्मार्थे पृथिवीं त्यजेत्||'.

Krishna's words disturb *Dhritarashtra* asking *Vidura* to fetch *Gandhari* to convince *Duryodhana* 'गच्छ तात महाप्राज्ञां गान्धारीं दीर्घदर्शिनीम्| आनयेह तया सार्धमनुनेष्यामि दुर्मतिम्|| यदि सापि दुरात्मानं शमयेद्दुष्टचेतसम्| अपि कृष्णस्य सुहृदस्तिष्ठेम वचने वयम्||'. *Dhritarashtra* like many fathers usually do when sons misbehave, tells her the moment she steps in that *her unworthy son* having spoken unrighteous words has left the assembly hall in anger 'एष गान्धारि पुत्रस्ते दुरात्मा शासनातिगः | ऐश्वर्यलोभादैश्वर्यं जीवितं प्रहास्यति || अशिष्टवदमर्यादः पापैः सह दुरात्मवान्| सभाया निर्गतो मूढो व्यतिक्रम्य सुहृद्वचः ||'. But for once, *Gandhari* rebukes the father himself for having pampered his son *Duryodhana* and being difficult to convince him now, though he would surely suffer the consequences 'त्व ह्येवात्र भृशं गर्ह्यो धृतराष्ट्रः सुतप्रियः || यो जानन्पापतामस्य तत्प्रज्ञामनुवर्तसे | स एष काममन्युभ्यां प्रलब्धो लोभमास्थितः | अशक्योऽद्य त्वया राजन्विनिवर्तयितुं बलात्|| राष्ट्रप्रदाने मूढस्य बालिशस्य दुरात्मनः | दुःसहायस्य लुब्धस्य धृतराष्ट्रोऽश्नुते फलम्||'.

Duryodhana and others are called back and the distraught mother pleads with him to listen to advice of his father and other elders, saying that one cannot be ruler just by desiring to rule, without restraint only then can he win a kingdom. What elders have spoken about *Krishna* and *Arjuna* is true and he should therefore agree with their advice and live in peace. 'न हि राज्यं महाप्राज्ञ स्वेन कामेन शक्यते | अवाप्तुं रक्षितुं वापि भोक्तुं भरतसत्तम ||.. कामक्रोधौ हि पुरुषमर्थेभ्यो व्यपकर्षतः | तौ तु शत्रू विनिर्जित्य राजा विजयते महीम्||.. आहुस्तथ्यान्तत् सत्यमजेयौ कृष्णपाण्डवौ || प्रपद्यस्व महाबाहुं कृष्णमक्लिष्टकारिणम्| प्रसन्नो हि सुखाय स्यादुभयोरेव केशवः ||'.

Gandhari's lamentation sounded like playing flute in front of a buffalo. *Duryodhana* was neither moved nor was amenable to listen. He in consultation with *Karna, Shakuni* and *Dushasana* decide that before *Krishna* could imprison his father and grandfather, they themselves should seize *Krishna* as prisoner and put end to negotiations, 'पुरायमस्मान्गृह्णाति क्षिप्रकारी जनार्दनः | सहितो धार्तराष्ट्रेण राजा शन्तनवेन च || वयमेव हृषीकेशं निगृह्णीम बलादिव |'. When *Satyaki* comes to know this devious plan, he informs *Krishna* and *Vidura* informs *Dhritarashtra* that his sons have come under the influence of काल, becoming emboldened to take *Krishna* a prisoner, which intention is sure to reduce every one to ashes 'इमं पुरुषशार्दूलमप्रधृष्यं दुरासदम्| आसाद्य न भविष्यन्ति पतङ्गा इव पावकम्||'.

Krishna then looking at *Duryodhana* speaks in the hearing of all the assembled rulers, that if they think that they can take him prisoner then surely such an order be issued. Then they will see whether they imprison him or he takes them as prisoners. They are eager to snatch the wealth belonging to *Pandavas,* and they will lose that even what they possess. He will fulfill *Yudhishthira's* task for him taking these evil *Kauravas* as prisoners and handing them over to *Pandavas.* But he will not give effect to this in *Dhritarashtra's* presence, since it is unrighteous and undesirable - 'राजन्नेते यदि क्रुद्धा मां निगृह्णीयुरोजसा || एते वा मामहं वैनाननुजानीहि पार्थिव | एतान्हि सर्वान्संरब्धान्नियन्तुमहमुत्सहे || न त्वहं निन्दितं कर्म कुर्यां पापं कथंचन | पाण्डवार्थे हि लुभ्यन्तः स्वार्थाद्धास्यन्ति ते सुताः || एते चेदेवमिच्छन्ति कृतकार्यो युधिष्ठिरः | अद्यैव ह्यहमेतांश्च ये चैताननु भारत || निगृह्य राजन्पार्थेभ्यो दद्यां किं दुष्कृतं भवेत्| इदं तु न प्रवर्तेयं निन्दितं कर्म भारत || इदं तु न प्रवर्तेयं निन्दितं कर्म भारत || संनिधौ ते महाराज क्रोधजं पापबुद्धिजम्| एष दुर्योधनो राजन्यथेच्छति तथास्तु तत्|| अहं तु सर्वास्तनयाननुजानामि ते नृप ||.

Listening to *Krishna's* daring words, *Dhritarashtra* becoming extremely agitated scolds *Duryodhana* saying that advised by the evil associates, how can he think of taking *Krishna* a prisoner whom even gods can not capture, trying the impossible thing like a child trying to hold moon by his hands - 'त्वमिमं पुण्डरीकाक्षमप्रधृष्य दुरासदम् | पापैः सहायैः संहत्य निग्रहीतुं किलेच्छसि || यो न शक्यो बलात्कर्तुं देवैरपि सवासवैः | न त्व प्रार्थयसे मन्द बालश्चन्द्रमसं यथा || देवैर्मनुष्यैर्गन्धर्वैरसुरैरुरगैश्च यः | न सोढुं समरे शक्यस्त्वं न बुद्ध्यसि केशवम्||'.Seeing *Duryodhana* unrepentant, *Vidura* tells him that *Krishna* is immutable in his power, his courage being immeasurable. If he becomes disrespectful to him, he is capable of destroying *Duryodhana* with all his advisors 'यद्यदिच्छेदयं शौरिस्तत्कुर्यादयत्नतः ||.. पश्यपर्यन्महाबाहुं कृष्णमक्लिष्टकारिणम्| पतङ्गोऽग्निमिवासाद्य सामात्यो न भविष्यसि ||'.

Seeing him still firm in obstinacy, *Krishna* cautions him not to think that he is alone but

Pandavas, Vrishnis and *Andhakas, Adityas, Rudra* and *Vasus* are all with him. Even as he spoke loud thunderous laughter was heard with flashes of lightening reverberating the space, in which luminous gods of the size of thumb were seen with *Brahma* stationed on *Krishna's* forehead, *Rudra* on his chest, many gods issueing forth from different parts of his body. On his shoulders were seen *Balarama* and *Arjuna* fully armed and he himself with his conch, discus and the mace. Flames were emanating from his eyes, ears, and nose and from every pore of his body, brilliant as Sun. *Krishna's* vision was accompanied by sound loud and clear of cymbals and conches, drums and bugles. Seeing the terrible form, assembled rulers closed their eyes in fright; *Bhishma, Drona, Vidura, Sanjay* and seers stood transfixed silently with wonder and stupefaction. *Dhritarashtra* both blind in body and in spirit, desired for once to see the resplendent form and *Krishna* gave him supra-sensory eye to see the vision 'अङ्गुष्ठमात्रास्त्रिदशा मुमुचुः पावकार्चिषः । तस्य ब्रह्मा ललाटस्थो रुद्रो वक्षसि चाभवत्॥ लोकपाला भुजेष्वासन्नग्निरास्यादजायत । आदित्याश्चैव साध्याश्च वसवोऽथाश्विनावपि ॥ मरुतश्च सहेन्द्रेण विश्वेदेवास्तथैव च । बभूवुश्चैव यक्षाश्च गन्धर्वोरगराक्षसाः ॥ प्रद्युम्नो तथा दोर्भ्यां सङ्कर्षणधनञ्जयौ । ..भीमो युधिष्ठिरश्चैव माद्रीपुत्रौ च पृष्ठतः । अन्धका वृष्णयश्चैव प्रद्युम्नप्रमुखास्ततः ॥ अग्रे बभूवुः कृष्णस्य समुद्यतमहायुधाः । शङ्खचक्रगदाशक्तिशार्ङ्गलाङ्गलनन्दकाः । अदृश्यन्तोद्यतान्येव सर्वप्रहरणानि च । नानाबाहुषु कृष्णस्य दीप्यमानानि सर्वशः ॥ नेत्राभ्यां नस्ततश्चैव श्रोत्राभ्यां च समन्ततः । प्रादुरासन्महारौद्राः सधूमाः पावकार्चिषः ॥ रोमकूपेषु च तथा सूर्यस्येव मरीचयः । तं दृष्ट्वा घोरमात्मानं केशवस्य महात्मनः ॥'.

When *Krishna* finally withdrew this resplendent vision from all, the assembled seers having seen the wonderful sight vanished from human sight. As *Krishna* was leaving, *Dhritarashtra* pleaded him not to doubt his intentions, telling that he is fond of the *Pandavas* and has tried to convince his errant son. *Krishna* turning his attention to *Bhisma* and others said now that they have seen what has transpired and how *Duryodhana* left the assembly in anger, with *Dhritarashtra* expressing his inability to control his sons, he has nothing more to do here. Therefore he will go and inform *Pandavas* accordingly and departs with his companions.

Chapter VII

In life there is time to be indifferent and time to seize the problems by its forelock and deal with them. *Krishna* does not waste time but proceeds further to deal with the problems with firm determination. But before he takes any further steps first he briefs *Kunti* that his helplessness in convincing *Duryodhana* and his efforts for a negotiated settlement having failed - 'उक्तं बहुविधं वाक्यं गहणीयं सहेतुकम् | ऋषिभिश्चैव च मया न चासौ तद्गृहीतवान्|| कालपक्वमिदं सर्वं सुयोधनवशानुगतम्| आपृच्छे भवतीं शीघ्रं प्रयास्ये पाण्डवान्प्रति ||'.

Hearing *Krishna's* words, *Kunti's* क्षत्र धर्म flares up with impatience and she tells *Krishna* to tell *Yudhsishthira* in no uncertain words that he should not merely speak about *Dharma* like a preacher of scriptures without understanding the essence concealed, but the time having come, become consciously aware of his *Kshatra Dharma* and fight like a warrior because failure to be more harmful to one's cause and bring disgrace to his ancestors - 'ब्रूयाः केशव राजानं धर्मात्मन युधिष्ठिरम्| भूयांस्ते हीयते धर्मो मा पुत्रक वृथा कथाः || श्रोत्रियस्येव ते राजन्मन्दकस्याविपश्चितः | अनुवाकहता बुद्धिर्धर्ममेवैकमीक्षते || अङ्गावेक्षस्व धर्मं त्वं यथा सृष्टः स्वयम्भुवा | बाहुभ्यां क्षत्रियाः सृष्टा बहुवीर्योपजीविनः ||. कालो वा कारणं राज्ञो राजा वा कालकारणम्| इति ते संशयो मा भूद्राजा कालस्य कारणम्||' *Brahmins* should live on charity, *Kshatriyas* by protecting people, *Vaishyas* amassing wealth and *Shudra* performing service. *Yudhishthira* is a *Kshatriya* let him behave like one. Neither receiving charity nor tilling lands for livelihood is his calling. His ancestral property is robbed by enemies; repossess it through negotiations, inducements or through schism or through force. What more reprehensible could there be than live as dependent when her brave sons are alive. 'ब्राह्मणः प्रचरेद्भैक्षं क्षत्रियः परिपालयेत्| वैश्यो धनार्जनं कुर्याच्छूद्रः परिचरेच्च तान्|| भैक्षं विप्रतिषिद्धं ते कृषिर्नैवोपपद्यते | क्षत्रियोऽसि क्षतात्त्राता बहुवीर्योपजीविता || पित्र्यमंश महाबाहो निमग्नं पुनरुद्धर | साम्ना भेदेन दानेन दण्डेनाथ नयेन वा || इतो दुःखतरं किं नु यदहं हीनबान्धवा | परपिण्डमुदीक्षे वै त्वां सूत्वामित्रानन्दन || युध्यस्व राजधर्मेण मा निमज्जीः पितामहान्| मा गमः क्षीणपुण्यस्त्वं सानुजः पापिकां गतीम्||'. Then in extreme grief, she laments earlier events saying that she does not regret *Yudhishthira* having played the game of dice or having lost, as much as the humiliation which *Draupadi* had to suffer 'न राज्यहरणं दुःखं द्यूतं चापि पराजयः | प्रव्राजनं सुतानां वा न मे तद्दुःखकारणम्|| यत्र सा बृहती श्यामा सभायां रुदती तदा | अश्रौषीत्परुषा वाचस्तन्मे दुःखतरं महान्|| .. तयोश्चैतदावज्ञानं यत्सा कृष्णा समरता | दुःशासनश्च यद्भीम कटुकान्यभाषत || पश्यतां कुरुवीराणां तच्च संस्मारयेः पुनः ||'. She offers her allegiance to धर्म - righteousness which alone upholds the creation and carries to its culmination. Remind *Arjuna* and *Bhima* the reason for which *Kshatriya* women bear sons has come 'नमो धर्माय महते धर्मो धारयति प्रजाः |.. यदर्थं क्षत्रिया सुते तस्य कालोऽयमागतः |'.

The moment he leaves *Kunti*, *Krishna* undertakes one of his many diplomatic moves designed to fulfill *Pandavas's* cause directly or indirectly. When he leaves the assembly hall, the first step he takes is to take *Karna* with him out side the limits of *Hastinaapura*. He praises him for reverence shown by him to *Brahmins* well-versed in scriptures and getting all his doubts clarified. Therefore, without any doubts he is well-qualified in the perennial principles prescribed in the scriptures- 'उपासितास्ते राधेय ब्राह्मणा वेदपारगाः | तत्त्वार्थं परिपृष्टाश्च नियतेनानसूयया || त्वमेव कर्ण जानासि वेदवादान्सनातनान्| त्वमेव धर्मशास्त्रेषु सूक्ष्मेषु परिनिष्ठितः ||'.

Krishna was a shrewd negotiator and diplomat and an expert tactician in times of War. This was proved when either he himself killed his adversaries himself like *Kamsa*, *Shrugal* or *Shishupala* or got them killed as in the case of *Kalayavana* and *Jarasandha*. He was a firm believer that if you can not win your enemies then break their ranks or at least their will to fight. He uses both tact and persuasion in dealing with him, lauding his wisdom and courage and then slowly conveying him that he is none other than *Kunti's* first born child prior to her marriage and not to the charioteer as normally understood. As such he is in fact a *Pandava*, elder even *Yudhishthira*, deserving respect from his other brothers as the rightful ruler once *Kauravas* are defeated 'सोऽसि कर्ण तथा जातः पाण्डोः पुत्रोऽसि धर्मतः | निग्रहाद् धर्मशास्त्राणामेहि राजा भविष्यसि || पितृपक्षं च ते पार्था मातृपक्षं च वृष्णयः | द्वौ पक्षावभिजानीहि त्वमेतौ पुरुषर्षभ || पादौ तव ग्रहीष्यन्ति भ्रातरः पञ्च पाण्डवाः | द्रौपदेयास्तथा पञ्च

सौभदश्चापराजितः ||.. अहं च त्वानुयास्यामि सर्वे चान्धकवृष्णयः | दाशार्हाः परिवारास्ते दाशार्णाश्च विशाम्पते || भुङ्क्ष्व राज्यं महाबाहो भ्रातृभिः सह पाण्डवैः |'.

Krishna consummate artist in diplomacy and statecraft that he was, uses his skill in diplomacy and negotiation tries his hand in shaking *Karna's* confidence, so that his affection and devotion to *Duryodhana* may be dented, if not at least his resolve be weakened to fight his brothers. But *Karna* was made of a different mettle, a person fully conscious of the gratitude for things done for him while he was low and beaten. He was a man of strong convictions, born to *Surya*, traversing like his father the ancient *Path* of righteousness well laid down by *Varuna*. Even as *Krishna* was aware of *Karna's* pedigree and his high character, *Karna* too was aware of his pedigree, bearing the pain in silence.

Therefore, with dignity and candour which comes from one who is steady in his righteous Path, *Karna* replies in calm and composed words that what he has spoken was undoubtedly true and that he is fully aware of those events. But it was the charioteer's wife who brought him up in life lovingly, when his own mother discarded him to protect her own character and reputation. How then could he deny his foster parents, now that they are old and need him more than ever? He has also married to a girl from the same community in which his foster parents belonged and has sons from her. At an important moment in his life, *Duryodhana* came to his assistance and gave him wealth, prosperity and protection for thirteen long years. It is on his strength that *Duryodhna* has now taken arms against *Pandavas*. Therefore, how could be desert *Kauravas* when they need him. It would not be proper but disgraceful for him to leave them. It would be far better that he is killed in the battle than leave them for fear of being taken prisoner, or through fear or greed 'सर्वं चैवाभिजानामि पाण्डोः पुत्रोऽस्मि धर्मतः | निग्रहाद्धर्मशास्त्राणां यथा त्वं कृष्ण मन्यसे || कन्या गर्भं समाधत्त भास्करान्मां जनार्दन | आदित्यवचनाच्चैव जातं मां सा व्यसर्जयत्||...सूतो हि मामधिरथो दृष्ट्वैवाभ्यानयद्गृहान् | राधायैश्च मा प्रादात्सौहार्दान्मधुसूदन ||...न पृथिव्या सकलया न सुवर्णस्य राशिभिः | हर्षाद्भयाद् वा गोविन्द मिथ्या कर्तुं तदुत्सहे ||'.

A great man that he is, *Karna* acknowledges the great debt of gratitude which he owes to *Duryodhana*, enjoying the rule for thirteen years and the caste in which he has been reared, performed great many sacrifices, their way of living and marrying. In fact relying on his support *Duryodhana* has taken up courage to fight the *Panadvas*. Therefore, dreading death, danger or greed he cannot undertake the unrighteous path against him 'धृतराष्ट्रकुले कृष्ण दुर्योधनसमाश्रयात् | मया त्रयोदश समा भुक्तं राज्यमकण्टकम् || मां च कृष्ण समासाद्य कृतः शस्त्रसमुद्यमः | दुर्योधनेन वार्ष्णेय विग्रहश्चापि पाण्डवैः || वधाद्बन्धाद्भयाद्वापि लोभाद्वापि जनार्दन | अनृतं नोत्सहे कर्तुं धार्तराष्ट्रस्य धीमतः ||'.

Therefore, *Karna* takes a promise from *Krishna* that he would divulge the conversation between them. Because the moment *Yudhishthira* hears the true facts, he will cease to fight him and would not accept the throne winning the war. If *Karna* wins the war then he assures *Krishna* that he will immediately hand it over to *Duryodhana*. It is, however, his sincere wish that *Yudhisthira* should always be the ruler 'मन्त्रस्य नियमं कुर्यास्त्वमत्र मधुसूदन | एतदत्र हितं मन्ये सर्वयादवनन्दन || यदि जानाति मां राजा धर्मात्मा संयतेन्द्रियः | कुन्त्याः प्रथमजं पुत्रं न स राज्यं ग्रहीष्यति || प्राप्य चापि महद्राज्यं तदहं मधुसूदन | स्फीतं दुर्योधनायैव सम्प्रदद्यामरिंदम || स एव राजा धर्मात्मा शाश्वतोऽस्तु युधिष्ठिरः | नेता यस्य हृषीकेशो योद्धा यस्य धनंजयः || पृथिवी तस्य राष्ट्रं च यस्य भीमो महारथः | नकुलः सहदेवश्च द्रौपदेयाश्च माधव ||'. A greater and magnanimous soul is no where to be found in *Mahabharata*.

Then in an unerring prophetic vision, *Karna* compares the struggle between *Pandavas* and *Kauravas* as a great यज्ञ, sacrifice for which *Duryodhana* has assembled many rulers, in which *Krishna* would be the *Witness* as well as the presiding priest. *Arjuna* would represent the masthead and various weapons would be the materials used in the sacrifice as well as the rites and rituals. He acknowledges that he has spoken many unpleasant and cruel words to *Pandavas*, which he regrets, that intransigence being redeemed only when he is killed by *Arjuna*. *Dushasana's* blood which *Bhima* would drink is like consuming सोम रस. When *Drona*, *Bhishma*, *Drishtadyumna* and *Shakuni* die, it will be the interval when the sacrifice will be stopped and the sacrifice will finally end when *Bhima* kills *Duryodhana*. When the wives, sons *Gandhari* and others shed tears on their death of their sons and husbands then *Krishna* will be the end of the funeral rites of the *Kaurvas*. It is for *Krishna* to see that finally all the great warriors who fall in the battle find place in heaven. A magnificent display of an outstanding personality - 'महानय कृष्ण क्षत्रस्य

मुदानय. | राज्यं पार्थमिदं दीप्तं प्रथितं सर्वराजसु || धार्तराष्ट्रस्य वार्ष्णेय शस्त्रयज्ञो भविष्यति | अस्य यज्ञस्य वेत्ता त्वं भविष्यसि जनार्दन || अध्वर्यवं च ते कृष्ण तुनाद्यम्निर्भविष्यति | होता चैवात्र बीभत्सुः संनद्धः स कपिध्वजः || गाण्डीवं स्रुक् तथा चाज्यं वीर्यं पुंसां भविष्यति |... स चैव तत्र धर्मात्मा शश्वद्राजा युधिष्ठिरः | जपैर्होमैश्च संयुक्तो ब्रह्मत्वं कारयिष्यति ||... अस्यां तत्र कपालानि पुरोडाशाः शिरांसि च | हविस्तु रुधिरं कृष्ण तस्मिन्यज्ञे भविष्यति ||...यदब्रुवमहं कृष्ण कटुकानि स पाण्डवान्| प्रियार्थं धार्तराष्ट्रस्य तेन तप्ते ह्यकर्मणा || यथा दक्ष्यसि मां कृष्ण निहतं सव्यसाचिना | पुनश्चितिस्तदा चास्य यज्ञस्याथ भविष्यति || दुःशासनस्य रुधिरं यदा पास्यति पाण्डवः | आनर्दं नर्दतः सम्यक् तदा सुत्यं भविष्यति || यदा द्रोणं च भीष्मं च पाञ्चाल्यौ पातयिष्यतः | तदा यज्ञावसानं तद् भविष्यति जनार्दन || दुर्योधनं यदा हन्ता भीमसेनो महाबलः | तदा समाप्स्यते यज्ञो धार्तराष्ट्रस्य माधव || स्नुषाश्च प्रस्नुषाश्चैव धृतराष्ट्रस्य सङ्गताः | हतेश्वरा नष्टपुत्रा हतनाथाश्च केशव || रुदत्यः सह गान्धार्या श्वगृध्रकुरराकुले | स यज्ञेऽस्मिन्नवभृथो भविष्यति जनार्दन ||..तदत्र पुण्डरीकाक्ष विधत्स्व यदभीप्सितम्| यथा कार्त्स्न्येन वार्ष्णेय क्षत्रं स्वर्गमवाप्नुयात्|| यावत् स्थास्यन्ति गिरयः सरितश्च जनार्दन | तावत्कीर्तिभवः शब्दः शाश्वतोऽयं भविष्यति ||'.

Krishna is the source and friend of every one and thing born and enemy of none. Therefore, he is extremely pleased with the words spoken by *Karna* and impressed by the manner in which he sees the life as a sacrifice in line with what *Prajapati* had ordained for human beings. For *Karna* every actions performed is in line with what his descent from *Surya* justifies performing his duties as sacrifice यज्ञार्थकर्म for maitenanace of the world order लोकसंग्रहमेव संपश्यन्कर्तुमर्हसि.

Krishna declares that if he does not desire temporal kingdom then he should surely be ready to die and attain heavenly world, since the season is almost at the close and seven days from अमावास्य the war will surely commence. *Karna* responds saying assuredly the end of the world will be coming soon in which all creatures will see their end. The why does he delude him with ignoble propositions, where *Duryodhana*, himself, *Shakuni* and others are but निमित्तमात्र, instrument is operation 'जानन्मां किं महाबाहो सम्मोहयितुमिच्छसि | योऽयं पृथिव्याः कार्त्स्न्येन विनाशः समुपस्थितः || निमित्तं तत्र शकुनिरहं दुःशासनस्तथा | दुर्योधनश्च नृपतिर्धृतराष्ट्रसुतोऽभवत्||...स्वप्ना हि बहवो घोरा दृश्यन्ते मधुसूदन | निमित्तानि च घोराणि यथोत्पाताः सुदारुणाः || पराजयं धार्तराष्ट्रे विजयं च युधिष्ठिरे | शंसन्त इव वार्ष्णेय विविधा रोमहर्षणि || ..विदितं मे हृषीकेश यतो धर्मस्ततो जयः ||... अहं चान्ये च राजानो यच्च तत्क्षत्रमण्डलम्| गाण्डीवाग्निं प्रवेक्ष्याम इति मे नास्ति संशयः ||'. Thereafter, he is sure to meet *Krishna* and himself again in heaven 'अपि त्वां कृष्ण पश्याम जीवन्तोऽस्मान्महारणात्| समुत्तीर्णा महाबाहो वीरक्षत्रविनाशनम्|| अथवा सङ्गमः कृष्ण स्वर्गे नो भविता ध्रुवम्| तत्रेदानीं समेष्यामः पुनः सार्धं त्वयानघ ||'. Then *Krishna* says pleased and with a brief smile - 'प्रहसन् वाक्यं स्मितपूर्वमिदम्, with full consciousness and appreciation of what can be expected from one who is assuredly *Surya's* son, having sourced his energy from the primal luminosity - 'उपस्थितविनाशेयं नूनमद्य वसुन्धरा | यथा हि मे वचः कर्ण नोपैति हृदयं तव || सर्वेषां तात भूतानां विनाशे प्रत्युपस्थिते | अनयो नयसंकाशो हृदयान्नापसर्पति ||.

Having been the architect, initiator and executioner of the *divine intent* and *purpose, Krishna* observes that the purpose is taking its course satisfactorily. *Karna's* importance in the entire course of *Mahabharata* is well delineated. He comes out quite courageous in nobility, who *Krishna* has to contend with and defeat improper manner and proper time, having been *Narakasura* whom he had earlier killed and now *Karna* as reborn. Unlike *Bhishma* and *Drona*, who were unwilling warriors fighting for *Duryodhana* only because of their having lived and received position and possession from *Kauravas, Karna* was a willing warrior to fight for them conscious of his obligation, friendship and gratitude towards *Duryodhana* for saving him from embarrassment and humiliation at an important moment of his life. *Krishna* was aware that while *asuras*, the forces of darkens were to enter the bodies of *Bhishma* and *Drona* obscuring their essence of discrimination and values of righteousness, *Karna* was in not bound such limitations, having been born primarily to take revenge against *Krishna* who had killed him in his earlier form as *Narakasaura*.

While *Krishna's* attempt was at best a diplomatic move by a pragmatic statesman, to confuse *Karna* and instill in him righteous feelings to align with forces of Light, as luminous *Surya's* son in *Kunti's* womb. *Kunti's* attempt in approaching *Karna* was an emotional approach of a heart-broken mother. Since the time she had first seen him at the time when *Drona* had arranged the test for his pupils, *Karna* had remained in her heart an embarrassing shame and guilt which at time passed turning in to a firm and unyielding youth, as firm and resolved on the path on the righteous path his father never straying from the Path which was laid down in the firmament.

Vidura sees through her increasing unease 'जानासि मे जीवपुत्रिभावं नित्यमविग्रहे | क्रोशतो न च गृह्णीते वचनं मे सुयोधन ||'

but the fear in her mind perhaps was not seen by him. When she observes *Duryodhana* is bent on doing great injustice to her sons and *Karna* is a willing participant, she decides to approach *Karna* to prevail upon him to align with *Pandavas*, even while thinking in her mind the earlier circumstances when she gave birth to him due to naive curiosity and deserted him to keep herself free from disrepute. When she goes to the banks of *Ganga*, she sees *Karna* with his face turned east offering obeisance to *Surya*, his father. She waited till he finished and when he turns back he sees her standing waiting for him. Seeing her he smiled and said that he is *Karna, Radha* and *Adhiratha's* son. What made her to come to him and in what manner he can be of use 'गधेयोऽहमाधिरथिः कर्णस्त्वामभिवादये | प्राप्ता किमर्थं भवती ब्रूहि किं करवाणि ते ||'. She meekly corrects him saying that he is her son; *Radha* is not his mother nor is *Adhiratha* his father. Know for certain that he was not born in a *Suta* family 'कौन्तेयस्त्वं न राधेयो न तवाधिरथः पिता | नासि सूतकुले जातः कर्णतद् विद्धि मे वचः ||'. Then she tells him all the events that lead to his birth. In her young age when he was still unmarried he was the first one born to her, born to her empowered with all weapons from *Surya*, who gives light and warmth to the worlds. Therefore he does deserve to be referred as सूतपुत्र - 'कानीनस्त्वं मया जातः पूर्वजः कुक्षिणाधृतः |..प्रकाशकर्मा तपनो योयं देवो विरोचनः | अजीजनत्त्वां मय्येष कर्ण शस्त्रभृतां वरम्||...कर्ण शोभिष्यसे नूनं पञ्चभिर्भ्रातृभिर्वृतः | देवैः परिवृतो ब्रह्मा वेद्यामिवमहाध्वरे || उपपन्नो गुणैः सर्वैर्ज्येष्ठः श्रेष्ठेषु बन्धुषु | सूतपुत्रेति मा शब्दः पार्थस्त्वमसि वीर्यवान्||'. Now he has been siding with *Duryodhana* who has snatched his brother's kingdom and he is helping the evil person in this act. Therefore, now he should leave *Kauravas* and come back to his brothers and rule the kingdom as the head of the *Pandavas* 'स त्वं भ्रातृनसम्बुद्ध्यं मोहाद्यदुपसेवसे | धार्तराष्ट्रानन तदयुक्तं त्वयि पुत्र विशेषतः ||'.

Karna is firm in his resolve, protesting that he cannot be fully inclined to her words; therefore he thinks it would not be unrighteous if he refuses to accede to her suggestion. It was she who was unjust to him, creating great suffering when she deserted him robbing the *sanksaras* which a *kshatriya* would have had. It is out of self-interest that she is now asking him to return to the fold. On the other hand, *Duryodhana* has given shelter when he needed it most. How can he desert him now, when the time has come to repay the debt of gratitude ? Why should she be concerned when *Arjuna* has *Krishna* are there to help *Panadavs* ? If he joins *Pandavas* at this stage people will speak unrighteous and offensive words that he is frightened of *Arjuna* -'न चैतच्छ्रद्दधे वाक्यं क्षत्रिये भाषितं त्वया | धर्मद्वारं ममैतत्स्यान्नियोगकरणं तव ||.. अहं त्वत्क्षत्रियो जातो न प्राप्तः क्षत्रसत्क्रियाम्| त्वत्कृते किं नु पापयः शत्रु कुर्यादहिमम्|| क्रियाकाले त्वनुकम्प्यकृत्वा त्वमिमं मम | हीनसंस्कारसमयमद्य मा समचूचुदः || न वै मम हितं पूर्वं मातृवच्चेष्टितं त्वया | सा मां सम्बोधयस्यद्य केवलात्महितैषिणी || कृष्णेन सहितात्को वै न व्यथेतधनञ्जयात्, कोऽद्य भीतं न मां विद्यात्पार्थानां समितिं गतम्| सर्वकामैः संविभक्तः पूजितश्च यथासुखम्| अहं वै धार्तराष्ट्राणां कुर्यां तदफलकथम्||.. मन्यन्ते ते कथं तेषामहं छित्त्वा मनोरथम्'. *Karna* tells her that the time has now come for him to fight for *Duryodhana* alone - 'अथ हि कालः सम्प्राप्तो धार्तराष्ट्रोपजीविनाम्, निर्वेष्टव्यं मया तत्र प्राणानपरिरक्षता || धृतराष्ट्रस्य पुत्राणामर्थे योत्स्यामि ते सुतैः | बलं च शक्तिं चास्थाय न वै त्वय्यनृतं वदे ||'.

No one can be unkind to one's mother howsoever unjust she has been due to circumstance beyond her consciousness. Therefore, seeing his mother's sorrowing countenance, he declares to her that he can not desert *Duryodhana* in this hour of his need; at the same time allow her go un-consoled. Therefore he assures her that he will not kill her other sons except *Arjuna*, even if they cross him in battle. Either he will win or *Arjuna* will, in any case she will be left with five *Pandavas* 'न च तेऽयं समारम्भो मयि मोघो भविष्यति | वध्यान्विषह्यान्संग्रामे न हनिष्यामि ते सुतान्|| युधिष्ठिरं च भीमं च यमौ चैवार्जुनादृते | अर्जुनेन समं युद्धमपि यौधिष्ठिरे बले || अर्जुनं हि निहत्याजौ सम्प्राप्तं स्यात्फलं मया | यशसा चापि युज्येयं निहतः सव्यसाचिना || न ते जातु न शिष्यन्ति पुत्राः पञ्च यशस्विनि | निरर्जुनाः सकर्णा वा सार्जुना वा हते मयि ||'. Hearing his words *Kunti* trembles declaring with shattered feelings, how difficult destiny but not to forget his promise is 'यथा त्वं भाषसे कर्ण दैवं तु बलवत्तरम्|| त्वया चतुर्णां भ्रातॄणामभयं शत्रुकर्शन दत्तं तत्प्रतिजानीहि संगरप्रतिमोचनम्||'. Though he unreservedly finds fault for *Kunti's* indiscreet curiosity which entailed miserable life for him, he was not insensitive to a mother's emotions. Thereafter wishing each other well, both leave.

One should rise above the dualities apparent in empirical life, the likes and dislikes, preferences and indifferences and perceive *Karna's* place without seeing in terms of white and black but as composite one light and shade. On one side we have *Bhishma* and *Drona* though enlightened were obscure, fighting for *Duryodhna* as reluctant warriors through mind bound by position and possession

received from *Kauravas*, when their heart was inclined towards *Pandavas*. *Karna* on the other hand, in spite of empathy for his mother and respect for *Yudhishthira* and fully conscious that he was born to *Kunti* and by tradition would have been accepted as eldest of the *Pandavas*, sincerely and without reservation, with all his mind and heart, was a willing warrior overwhelmed by his friendship and gratitude not wavering in his righteous allegiance to *Duryodhana* as duty bound for the benefits received from him. Though he unreservedly finds fault for *Kunti's* indiscreet curiosity which entailed miserable life for him, he was not insensitive to a mother's emotions. His respect for *Bhishma* and *Drona* was unquestionable, only feeling the pain for being treated as outcaste in the company of the equals. A proud of his valour and achievements he was not ready to compromise with any one on chivalry. If he opposes *Arjuna* it is because he sees in him a competent warrior like himself and adversary equal in valour and proud in his achievements.

Krishna sees no further purpose will be served in preventing him from active participation in the war, pursuing other means and methods to further the interest of the *Pandavas*. Returning he reports the events that transpired in *Kaurava's* court. In the beginning, *Bhishma* advised *Duryodhana* since *Dhritarashtra* was born blind, *Pandu* became the ruler. After him *Yudhishthira* is the lawful ruler. Therefore give him half of the kingdom and not be obstinate saying that during his life only he will rile the lands 'अन्धः करणहीनत्वान्न वै राजा पिता तव | राजा तु पाण्डुरभवन्महात्मा लोकविश्रुतः || स राजा तस्य पुत्राः पितुर्दायाद्यहारिणः | स तात कलहं कार्षी राज्यस्यार्धं प्रदीयताम्|| मयि जीवति राज्यं कः सम्प्रशासेत्पुमानिह | मावमंस्था वचो मह्यं शर्मिच्छामि वः सदा ||'. Then *Drona* intervening told him that in the beginning *Pandu* ruled the kingdom and handed it over to *Dhritarashtra* when he departed to the forests with his wives. *Dhritarashtra* ruled it with *Vidura* as his advisor. In such circumstances *Duryodhana* should not break this understanding but share the kingdom with his cousins and enjoy the fruits - 'ज्येष्ठाय राज्यमददाद्धृतराष्ट्रस्य धीमते | यवीयसे तथा क्षत्त्रे कुरूणां वंशवर्धनः || ततः सिंहासने राजन्स्थापयित्वैनमच्युतम्| वनं जगाम कौरव्यो भार्याभ्यां सहितो नृपः ||...सिंहासनस्थो नृपतिर्धृतराष्ट्रो महाबलः | अन्वास्यमानः सततं विदुरेण महात्मनः || कथं तस्य कुले जातः कुलभेदं व्यवस्यसि | सम्भूय भ्रातृभिः सार्धं भुङ्क्ष्व भोगाञ्जनाधिप ||'.

Vidura was uncompromising in his anguish, remarking that the *Kuru* race is being exterminated and ever attempt should be made to revive it. Who is this *Duryodhana* who has come as the destroyer of the family? Every one seems to have come under his influence. Take him a prisoner and hand him over to *Pandavas* 'प्रणष्टः कौरवो वंशस्त्वयायं पुनरुद्धृतः || ..कोऽयं दुर्योधनो नाम कुलेऽस्मिन्कुलपांसनः || यस्य लोभाभिभूतस्य मतिं समनुवर्तसे |...बध्वा वा निष्कृतिप्रज्ञं धार्तराष्ट्रं सुदुर्मतिम्|| शाधीदं राज्यमद्याशु पाण्डवैरभिरक्षितम्|'. *Gandhari* too support these noble sentiments, *Dhritarashtra* finally pointing out that he would not have been a king, being unqualified to be one, *Yudhishthira* alone being entitled to the kingdom as ancestral legacy, Therefore, it is not proper for him covet and jeep the kingdom not even sharing with his cousins 'तथैवाहं मतिमता परिचिन्त्येह पाण्डुना | ज्येष्ठः प्रभ्रंशितो राज्याद्धीनाङ्ग इति भारत || पाण्डुस्तु राज्यं सम्प्राप्तः कनीयानपि सन्नृपः | विनाशे तस्य पुत्राणामिदं राज्यमरिंदम || मय्यभागिनि राज्याय कथं त्वं राज्यमिच्छसि | अराजपुत्रो ह्यस्वामी परस्वं हर्तुमिच्छसि || युधिष्ठिरो राजपुत्रो महात्मा न्यायगतं राज्यमिदं च तस्य |..अराजपुत्रस्त्वमनार्यवृत्तो लुब्धः सदा बन्धुषु पापबुद्धिः | क्रमागतं राज्यमिदं परेषां हर्तुं कथं शक्ष्यसि दुर्विनीत ||'.

Krishna also informs them that he having made all efforts to prevent the war and establish peace. Therefore, they are free from any inhibitions and should now be ready top fulfill the obligation cast on them by *Dharma* since now no one will hold them responsible any longer for the war- 'मयापि हि महाबाहो त्वत्प्रियार्थं महाहवे || कृतो यत्नो महांस्तत्र शमः स्यादिति भारत | धर्मस्य गतमानृण्यं न स्म वाच्या विवक्षताम्||', finally telling *Yudhshthira* that all the extended attempts to convince *Duryodhana* having failed, he needs now to be punished, there being no other alternative fight for one's rights. One can not go long by offering sacrifices, war alone being the inevitable course 'साम्यमादौ प्रयुक्तं मे राजन्सौभ्रात्रमिच्छता | अभेदायास्य वंशस्य प्रजानां च विवृद्धये || पुनर्भेदश्च मे युक्तो यदा साम न गृह्यते | कर्मानुकीर्तनं चैव देवमानुषसंहितम्|| यदा नादियते वाक्यं सामपूर्वं सुयोधनः | तदा मया समानीय भेदिताः सर्वपार्थिवाः || अद्भुतानि च घोराणि दारुणानि च भारत | अमानुषाणि कर्माणि दर्शितानि मया विभो || .. एवमुक्तोऽपि दुष्टात्मा नैव भागं व्यमुञ्चत | दण्डं चतुर्थं पश्यामि तेषु पापेषु नान्यथा ||..न ते राज्यं प्रयच्छन्ति विना युद्धेन पाण्डव | विनशिष्यन्ति सर्वे प्रत्युपस्थितमृत्यव || नैष कामयते धर्मं नैष कामयते यशः | जितं स मन्यते सर्वं दुरात्मा कर्णमाश्रितः || बन्धमाज्ञापयामास मम चापि सुयोधन | न च तं लब्धवान् कामं दुरात्मा पापनिश्चयः || न च भीष्मो न च द्रोणो युक्तं तत्राहतुर्वचः | सर्वे तमनुवर्तन्ते ऋते

विदुरमच्युत ||... ना चापि वयमत्यर्थं पतित्यागेन कर्हिचित्| कौरवैः शर्मनिच्छामस्तत्र युद्धमनन्तरम् ||'.

This does not please *Yudhishthira* seeing the turn of events, in spite of *Duryodhana* being advised by elders. He wondered at the strange and inexplicable way of दैव, the *divine Will* which directs the course of human life and lamenting that in war one has to kill even the innocent, not deserving to be killed. Indeed the purpose for which they went in exile and suffered indignities has not been served 'अवध्यानां वधं पश्यन् धर्मराजो युधिष्ठिरः | निःश्वसन्भीमसेनं च विजयं चेदमब्रवीन्|| यदर्थं वनवासश्च प्राप्तं दुःखं च यन्मया | सोऽयमस्मानुपैत्येव परोऽनर्थः प्रयत्नतः || तस्मिन्यत्नः कृतोऽस्माभिः स नो हीनः प्रयत्नतः | अकृते तु प्रयत्नेऽस्मानुपावृत्तः कलिमहान्||'. When everyone gathered there looked to *Yudhishthira* for his reaction, he replied that there seems to be no other course than going to war with *Kauravas.* Then he turns to *Krishna* for their next course since *Duryodhana* has rejected depending on *Karna's* valour. He was shocked to know that he even attempted to take him prisoner and that *Bhishma* and *Drona* remained immobilized not restraining him, only *Vidura* protesting without any hope.

Yudhishthira lauds his efforts for diffusing the possibility of war and accepts that the war has now become a certainty and imminent. Soon the clarion call is given and bugles began blowing, formation of armies came to be finalized. *Yudhishthira* narrates to *Krishna* the names of many seniors to be the leader of the armies, whereupon *Krishna* informs that while all those whose names were mentioned by him are undoubtedly capable, he himself decided as the General of the *Pandavas'* army he will be so appointed and that will be *Drishtadhyumna* which announcement is received with universal approbation by the warriors and the soldiers, their excited tumult reaching the very heavens. 'धृष्टद्युम्नमहं मन्ये सेनापतिमरिंदम || एवमुक्ते तु कृष्णेन सम्प्राहृष्यन्नरोत्तमाः || तेषां प्रहृष्टमनसां नादः समभवन्महान्| योग इत्यथ सैन्यानां त्वरतां सम्प्रधावताम्||..ततः शब्दः समभवत्समुद्रस्येव पर्वणि | हृष्टानां सम्प्रयातानां घोषो दिवमिवास्पृशत्||'.

Here among the *Kaurava's* camp, the moment *Krishna* left *Hastinapur*, *Duryodhana* calls *Karna*, *Dushasana* and *Shakuni* and tells them that now that *Krishna* has failed in his negotiations he will undoubtedly incite *Pandavas* to fight them. In fact he himself has already been wanting to fight the *Pandavas, Bhima* and *Arjuna* being ready to meet them on the battle field, *Virata*, *Drupada* joining them. Therefore, they should begin their preparations 'अकृतेनैव कार्येण गतः पार्थानधोक्षजः | स एनान्मन्युनाऽविष्टो ध्रुवं धक्ष्यत्यसंशयम्|| इष्टो हि वासुदेवस्य पाण्डवैर्मम विग्रहः | भीमसेनार्जुनौ चैव दाशार्हस्य मते स्थितौ || अजातशत्रुरप्यद्य भीमसेनवशानुगः |'.

After appointing various rulers as chiefs of different battalions, *Duryodhana* approaches *Bhishma* to command his army since he is known as one whose death is at his *Will* and no one being capable to kill him, not even the gods - 'भवानुशनसा तुल्यो हितैषी च सदा मम | असंहार्यः स्थितो धर्मे स नः सेनापतिर्भव ||.. भवता हि वयं गुप्ताः शक्रेणेव दिवौकसः | अनाधृष्या भविष्यामस्त्रिदशानामपि ध्रुवम्||'. *Bhishma*, ever conscious of the responsibility his father *Prateep* and undertaken and which he tried to continue, to safeguard the family 'प्रतीपः शान्तनुस्तत कुलस्यार्थे यथा स्थितः | यथ्थ देवव्रतो भीष्मः कुलस्यार्थे स्थितोऽभवत्||', agrees to his request and fight on his behalf killing thousands of their soldiers each day, till the time comes when he lays down his arms. However unlike *Karna*, he makes it clear that no one in world except perhaps *Arjuna*, can engage him in battle but he will not fight him or any among *Pandu's* sons, since he is equally fond of them. Further if they ask his advice then he will not hesitate to give it to them 'एवमेतन्महाबाहो यथा वदसि भारत | यथैव हि भवन्तो मे तथैव मम पाण्डवाः || अपि चैव मया श्रेयो वाच्यं तेषां नराधिप | मंत्रयितव्यं तवार्थाय यथा मे समयः कृतः || न तु पश्यामि योद्धारमात्मनः सदृशं भुवि | ऋते तस्मान्नरव्याघात्कुन्तीपुत्राद् धनंजयात्||..न त्वेवाल्पादनीया मे पाण्डोः पुत्रा जनाधिप | तस्मादयोधान्हनिष्यामि पायोगेणायुत सदा ||'. He has an additional condition and that is not to *Duryodhana's* liking that *Karna* would not be allowed to fight so long as he fights, because he is aggressively competes with him. *Karna* graciously assures that he will not lift any arms so long as *Bhishma* is alive and fighting- 'नाहं जीवति गाङ्गेये राजन्योत्स्ये कथञ्चन | हते भीष्मे तु योत्स्यामि सह गाण्डीवधन्वना ||'. *Duryodhana* and *Karna* both agreeing to these conditions, *Bhishma* is designated as the commander of *Kaurava* armies.

Karna was fully conscious that *Kurukshetra* was the auspicious place for generations for fulfillment of auspicious deeds, *Bhargava Parashurama* having offered as oblation to his ancestors the

lood of the *Kshatriya* after their slaughter. Therefore, he conceptualized the battle not merely as a emporal affair but a spiritual adventure elevated to level if universal यज्ञ. Therefore, *Vyasa* found it ecessary to designate it as the field of righteousness - धर्मक्षेत्र, where again the forces of *Light* gather to estroy the forces of *Darkness* and establish righteousness under the watchful eye of *Krishna*, the Witness as well as the prime mover.

When the great war was about to commence, *Balarama* arrives there with *Akrura*, *Gada*, *Samba*, *Uddahava*, *Pradyumna* and others and speaks to *Yudhishthira* that a great slaughter of human beings is about to take place, from which he wants to see them hale, hearty and safe at the end of the war 'अविनाय महारौद्रो दारुणः पुरुषक्षयः | दिष्टमेनदध्रुवं मन्ये न शक्यामनिवर्तितुम्|| तस्मादयुद्धात् समुत्तीर्णानपि वः ससुहृज्जनान्| अरोगानक्षतैर्देहैद्रष्टास्मीति मतिर्मम ||'. He informs him that he has advised *Krishna* to be fair to both sides since both are related, besides both *Bhima* and *Duryodhana* having been his dear pupils. But he did not listen but aligned himself with them. Therefore, their success is assured. As far as he is concerned he cannot go against *Krishna* therefore, the only alternative availed is to go on pilgrimage in the intervene period - 'उक्तो मया वासुदेवः पुनः पुनरुपह्वरे | सम्बन्धिषु समां वृत्तिं वर्तस्व मधुसूदन || पाण्डवा हि यथास्माकं तथा दुर्योधनो नृपः | तस्यापि क्रियतां साह्यं स पर्येति पुनः पुनः || तच्च मे नाकरोद्वाक्यं त्वदर्थे मधुसूदनः | निर्विष्टः सर्व भावेन धनंजयमवेक्ष्य ह || ध्रुवो जयः पाण्डवानामिति मे निश्चिता मतिः | तथा ह्यभिनिवेशोऽयं वासुदेवस्य भारत || न चाहमुत्सहे कृष्णमृते लोकमवीक्षितुम्| ततोऽहमनुवर्तामि केशवस्य चिकीर्षितम्|| उभौ शिष्यौ हि मे वीरौ गदायुद्धविशारदौ | तुल्यस्नेहोऽस्म्यतो भीमे तथा दुर्योधने नृपे || तस्माद् यास्यामि तीर्थानि सरस्वत्या निषेवितुम्| न हि शक्ष्यामि कौरव्यान्नश्यमानानुपेक्षितुम्||'. Saying thus he leaves for pilgrimage.

At this stage *Rukmi*, *Rukmini's* brother whom *Krishna* defeated and humiliated after his refusal to him marrying his sister, perhaps to ingratiate himself to them, comes to *Pandavas* to offer his help. *Yudhishthira* welcomes him giving him all respects and praising him extensively. *Rukmi* pleased and puffed with pride by the welcome received, *Rukmi* assures them that now that he has come to their assistance they need not be frightened of *Kauravas* - 'सहायोऽस्मि स्थितो युद्धे यदि भीतोऽसि पाण्डव | करिष्यामि रणे साह्यमसह्यं तव शत्रुभिः || न हि मे विक्रमे तुल्य पुमानस्तीह कश्चन | हनिष्यामि रणे भागं यन्मे दास्यसि पाण्डव || अपि द्रोणकृपौ वीरौ भीष्मकर्णावथो पुनः | अथवा सर्व एवैते तिष्ठन्तु वसुधाधिपाः || निहत्य समरे शत्रूंस्तव दास्यामि मेदिनीम्|. *Arjuna*, however, seeing his arrogance, puts him down declining his offer, asking whether one born in *Kuru* family and especially to *Pandu*, whose teacher was *Drona* himself and *Krishna* was his companion, holds *Gandeev* in his hand, appears as frightened ? He need not be under the impression that they are afraid of any one and need help. Therefore, he may stay with them or leave as he chooses 'उवाच धीमान्कौन्तेयः प्रहस्य सखिपूर्वकम्|| कौरवाणां कुले जातः पाण्डोः पुत्रो विशेषतः || द्रोणं व्यपदिशञ्शिष्यो वासुदेवसहायवान्| भीतोऽस्मीति कथं ब्रूयां दधानो गाण्डीवं धनुः || .. धारयन्गाण्डिवं दिव्यं धनुस्तेजोमयं दृढम्| अक्षय्यशरसंयुक्तो दिव्यास्त्रपरिबृंहितः ||..नास्मि भीतो महाबाहो सहायार्थश्च नास्ति मे | यथाकामं यथायोगं गच्छ वान्यत्र तिष्ठ वा ||'. *Rukmi* disappointed by this curt reply crosses over to *Duryodhana* to join him. But when he speaks in like arrogant manner to *Duryodhana* from there also he is repulsed.

Here in *Hastinapura*, *Dhritarashtra* is in confused mind. Though he realizes that every thing happens as ordained by *divine intent* he regrets that he is not able to prevent his sons form performing unrighteous actions, his mind changing every time Duryodhana comes in his presence - 'भवत्येव हि मे सुत बुद्धिर्दोषानुदर्शिनी | दुर्योधनं समासाद्य पुनः सा परिवर्तते || एवं गते वै यद्भावि तद्भविष्यति संजय | क्षत्रधर्मः किल रणे तनुत्यागो हि पूजितः ||'. *Sanjaya* as usual offers words of wisdom and comfort, saying that a person reaps ignoble fruits by his ignoble actions, therefore should not hold *divine intent* responsible for the consequences of his temporal actions. 'य आत्मनो दुश्चरितादशुभं प्राप्नुयान्नरः | न स कालं न वा देवानेनसा गन्तुमर्हसि ||'. Some perform acts as per the *divine Will*, some others perform acts instinctively and still some others in accordance with their earlier *karmas*. Therefore, he should now patiently wait and see the events as they unfold 'केचिदीश्वरनिर्दिष्टाःकेचिदेव यदृच्छया | पूर्व कर्मभिरप्यन्ये त्रैधमेतत्प्रदृश्यते | तस्मादनर्थमापन्नः स्थिरो भूत्वा निशामय ||'.

Seeing *Pandava's* army gathered in full strength, *Karna* advises *Duryodhana* to depute *Uluka*, *Shakuni's* son with a message full of arrogance and insinuations to *Pandavas* to weaken their resolve, in the very presence of *Krishna*. The time has now come for them to redeem their resolve. *Yudhishthira* has been claiming himself to be righteous has charged *Duryodhana* for having caused sufferings for his

people, which they have now to justify on the battle field giving up dishonesty. Instead he seems to the author of great destruction of the whole humanity. *Duryodhana* therefore, calls *Yudhishthira* to figh like a *Kshatriya* giving up all pretense as one who is righteous in his dealings 'यदेतत्कत्थनावाक्यं संजयो महदब्रवीत् वासुदेवसहायस्य गर्जतः सानुजस्य ते | मध्ये कुरूणां कौन्तेय तस्य कालोऽयमागतः || यथा वः सम्प्रतिज्ञातं तत्सर्वं क्रियतामिति |...कथं वा धार्मिको भूत्वा त्वमधः मनः कृथाः || य इच्छति जगत्सर्वं नश्यमानं नृशंसवत्| अभयं सर्वभूतेभ्यो दाता त्वमिति मे मतिः || ... त्यक्त्वा छद्म त्विदं राजन्क्षत्रधर्मं समाश्रितः | कुरु कार्याणि सर्वाणि धर्मिष्ठोऽसि नरर्षभ ||'.

Then as a final challenge he tells *Yudhishthira* that after winning the worlds through strength o one's shoulders, he should either give it in charity or offer it to his ancestors as oblation. Their mothe *Kunti* has suffered for number of years therefore, wipe out her tears winning the war. Even his reques for five villages having been rejected, be ready to fight for them. Through *Krishna, Panadavas* had sen a message that they are ready for peace as well as fir war, Therefore, be ready to fight 'बाहुवीर्येण पृथिवीं लब्ध्वा भरतसत्तम | देहि दानं द्विजातिभ्यः पितृभ्यश्च यथोचितम् || क्लिष्टाया वर्षपूगांश्च मातुर्मातृहिते स्थितः | प्रमार्जाश्रु रणे जित्वा सम्मनं परमावह || पञ्च ग्रामा वृत यत्नान्नास्माभिरपवर्जिताः | युध्यामहे कथं संख्ये कोपयेम च पाण्डवान्||'. *Duryodhana* finally therefore, calls *Yudhishthira* to figh like a *Kshatriya* giving up all pretence of righteous in dealings. He chides him to remember as one having lost the game of dice and kingdom, had to see *Draupadi* dragged in humiliation, exiled in the forests for twelve years and living one year as servile servants in *Virata's* court - 'पराजितोऽसि द्यूतेन कृष्णा चानायित सभाम्| शक्योऽमर्षो मनुष्येण कर्तुं पुरुषमानिना || द्वादशैव तु वर्षाणि वने धिष्ण्याद् विवासितः | संवत्सरं विराटस्य दास्यमास्थाय चोषितः || अमर्षं राज्यहरणं वनवासं च पाण्डव | द्रौपद्याश्च परिक्लेशं संस्मरन्पुरुषो भव ||.. त्रयोदश समा भुक्तं राज्यं विलपतस्तव | भूयश्चैव प्रशासिष्ये निहत्य त्वां सबान्धवान् ||'.

Duryodhana's message to *Krishna* was to inform him that his display of miraculous powers being for was and not for peace, does not frighten him, since he too can display illusory forms and can fly in the sky, surmount space and visit even *Indra's* court. Performance of such acts do not bring success in battles, where only *divine will* prevails. Instead he should come on the battle field and fight like a *Kshatriya*. Therefore, he should come on the battle field and fight like a *Kshatriya* instead of showing miracles - 'सभामध्ये च यद्रूपं मायया कृतवानसि | तत्तथैव पुनः कृत्वा सार्जुनो मामभिद्रव ||..वयमप्युत्सहेम द्यां ख च गन्तुं मायया | रसातलं विशामोऽपि ऐन्द्रं वा पुरमेव तु || दर्शयेम च रूपाणि स्वशरीरे बहून्यपि | न तु पर्यायतः सिद्धिर्बुद्धिमाप्नोति मानुषीम्||..मनसैव हि भूतानि धातैव कुरुते वशे |'. He disputes even *Krishna's* fame in the three worlds saying that it is without any rhyme and reason. Therefore, those who take shelter behind his greatness are no better than eunuchs. In fact he is of the opinion that even it is not proper for *Duryodhana* born a *Kshatriya* prince, to fight one who was born as son to *Kamsa's* servant 'अकस्माच्चैव ते कृष्ण ख्यातं लोके महद्यशः | अद्यैतानि विजानीमः सन्ति षण्ढाः सश्रृङ्गकाः | मद्विधो नापि नृपतिस्त्वयि युक्तः कथञ्चन || सन्नाहं संयुगे कर्तुं कंसभृत्य विशेषतः |'.

He showers ridicule on *Bhima* as one without a moustache, fond of food, a glutton, who showed his best performance only as a cook in *Virata's* royal kitchen. Now the time has come for him to be killed on the battlefield, having boasted that he will kill *Kauravas*. He is good only for heavy banquet, not for fierce battle. Food and War are of different mettle, be therefore ready for fighting the battle 'प्रतिज्ञातं सभामध्ये न तस्मिन्मिथ्या त्वया पुरा || दुःशासनस्य रुधिरं पीयतां यदि शक्यते |..निर्हनिष्यामि तरसा तस्य कालोऽयमागतः || त्वं हि भोज्ये पुरस्कार्यो भक्ष्ये पेये च भारत | क्व युद्धं क्व च भोक्तव्यं युध्यस्व पुरुषो भव ||'.

To *Arjuna* he had reserved special slight saying either he should defeat them as claimed and rule the world or be defeated by them, die on the battle ground. He challanges *Arjuna* to behave like a *Kshatriya* remembering the time spent in exile and *Draupadi's* humiliation or at least like a man. Where was his heroism when *Yudhsishthira* was defeated in the game and *Draupadi* humiliated! *Duryodhana* is aware that *Krishna* is his friend and that *Gandeeva* bow which he has and that there are no other warriors like him. Knowing this completely, he *Duryodhana* has snatched their share, reminding him the time when lived like a eunuch, dancing in the company of women. *Duryodhana* is not afraid of him or of *Krishna*, therefore, they should dare and fight with them. Tens of thousands of *Krishnas* and *Arjunas* will run away from the battle field, frightened when they see *Kaurava* army. It would be better for them to sit quietly in the corner, because kingdom is not meant for him or to his brothers 'अस्मान्वा त्वं

गजित्य पशाधि पृथिवीमिमाम्| अथवा निर्जितोऽस्मामी रणे वीर शयिष्यसि || राष्ट्रान्निर्वासनक्लेशं वनवासं च पाण्डव | कृष्णायाश्च परिक्लेशं संस्मरन्पुरुषो व ||..पराजितोऽसि द्यूतेन कृष्णा चानायिता सभाम्| शक्योऽमर्षो मनुष्येण कर्तुं पुरुषमानिना ||..जानामि ते वासुदेवं सहायं जानामि ते गाण्डीवं तालमात्रम्| जानाम्यहं सदृशो नास्ति योद्धा जानानस्ते राज्यमेतद्धरामि ||.. क्व तदा गाण्डीवं तेऽभूद्यत्त्वं दासपणैर्जितः | क्व तदा भीमसेनस्य बलमासीच्च फाल्गुन ||..अवोचं त्पण्ढतिलानह वस्तथ्यमेव तत्| धृता हि वेणी पार्थेन विराटनगरे तदा ||..एवमेव सदा दण्डं क्षत्रियाः क्षत्रियं दधुः | वेणीं कृत्वा पण्डवेषः कन्यां नर्तितवानसि || न याद् वासुदेवस्य न चापि तव फाल्गुन | राज्यं प्रतिप्रदास्यामि युद्ध्यस्व सहकेशवः || न माया हीन्द्रजालं वा कुहका वापि भीषणा | आत्तशस्त्रस्य संग्रामे वहन्ति प्रतिगर्ज ा || वसुदेवसहस्रं वा फाल्गुनानां शतानि वा | आसाद्य माममोघेषुं द्रविष्यन्ति दिशो दश ||'.

Finally, *Duryodhana,* puffed with arrogance about the might of his army, compares his army is like ocean, in which *Kripa* is like a whale, *Vivimshati* like huge serpent, *Brihadbala* like typhoon, *Bhurishvas* like fish, *Bhishma* like a strong current, *Drona* like the abyss, *Karna, Salya* being the whirl pools, *Kambhoj* being the forest fire. *Dushasana* is the tempestuous stream, *Sushena* and *Chitrayuda* as serpent and the crocodile respectively, *Jayadhratha* firm as the mountain, *Purusmitra* his strength and *Shakuni* as the stream.

The message conveyed through *Uluka* creates great agony among *Pandavas*. But *Krishna* conveys another message to *Duryodhana* challenging him to come to the battle field and show his manliness, instead of speaking empty words. If he thinks that having become the charioteer, *Krishna* will refrain from the fight, then he should remember by mere wish, he can destroy them all even as fire destroys the grass - 'श्व इदानीं प्रपद्येथाः पुरुषो भव दुर्मते || मन्यसे यच्च मूढ त्वं न योत्स्यति जनार्दनः | सारथ्येन वृत्तः पार्थस्येति त्वं न बिभेषि च || जघन्यकालमप्येतन्न भवेत् सर्वपार्थिवान्| निर्दहेयमहं क्रोधात्तृणानीव हुताशनः ||', *Arjuna* assuring *Duryodhana* they will surely meet on the battle field 'कैतव्य गत्वा भरतान्समेत्य सुयोधनं धार्तराष्ट्रं वदस्व | तथेत्युवाचार्जुनः सव्यसाची निशाव्यपाये भविता विमर्दः ||'.

The armies of both sides gather on the *Kurukshetra,* even as *Yudhishthira* was leading his army under *Drishtadhyumna* and *Duryodhana* at some distance marching under *Bhishma* who was praising his soldiers in glowing terms, without sparing *Karna* in between considering him as harsh, egoistic and base, with unhealthy eagerness to fight *Pandavas.* He considers *Karna* not a great warrior in battles, yet boasting to be one, having been cursed by *Parashurama* will not be able to confront *Arjuna. Drona* dutifully agrees with this assessment 'सखा ते दयितो नित्यं य एष रणकर्कशः | उत्साहयति राजंस्त्वां विग्रहे पाण्डवैः सह || परुषः कत्थनो नीचः कर्णो वैकर्तनस्तव | मन्त्री नेता च बन्धुश्च मानी चात्यन्तमुच्छ्रितः || एष नैव रथः कर्णो न चाप्यतिरथो रणे | वियुक्तः कवचेनैव सहजेन विचेतनः || कुण्डलाभ्यां च दिव्याभ्यां वियुक्तः सततं घृणी | अभिशापाच्च रामस्य ब्राह्मणस्य च भाषणात्|| करणानां वियोगाच्च तेन मेऽर्धरथो मतः | नैष फाल्गुनमासाद्य पुनर्जीवन्विमोक्ष्यते ||'.

In the company of his companion and associate *Kshatriyas*, *Karna* is often confused when *Bhishma* questions his credentials as a warrior. He remonstrates why *Bhishma* always plays him down with dislike, when he on his part has always been respectful towards him. Therefore, the words coming from him are unwarranted. He assures that he is suffering his barbs being devoted friend and well-wisher of *Duryodhna.* This would undoubtedly harm the interest of the *Kauravas*, especially when the army is ready for war. Then he caustically says that neither old age nor weaith makes one a great charioteer but only he who displays valour and courage in times of war. Then turning to *Duryodhana* he remarks that since the grandfather seems to be weakening the will of his warriors it would be difficult to muster their confidence once it is robbed by loose words spoken, becoming difficult to instill later. On one side, there are these warriors ready to fight and on the other *Bhishma* thinking himself knowledgeable and courageous one discourages warriors with his intemperate language. Indeed, old ones should be listened and respected but not one as old as *Bhishma* who blabbers like little children. Therefore, *Karna* announces that he will not fight so long as *Bhishma* is the commander of the armies 'पितामह यथेष्ट मां वाक्शरैरुपकृन्तसि | अनागसं सदा द्वेषादेवमेव पदे पदे || मर्षयामि च तत्सर्वं दुर्योधनकृतेन वै | त्वं तु मां मन्यसे मन्दं कापुरुषं तथा || भवानर्धरथो मह्यं मतो वै नात्र संशयः | सर्वस्य जगतश्चैव गाङ्गेयो न मृषा वदेत्||.. न हायनैर्न पलितैर्न वित्तैर्न च बन्धुभिः | महारथत्वं संख्यातुं शक्यं क्षत्रस्य कौरव ||..भिन्ना हि सेना नृपते दुःसंधेया भवत्युत | मौला हि पुरुषव्याघ्र किमु नानासमुत्थिताः || एषां द्वैध समुत्पन्न योधानायुधि भारत | तेजोवधो नः क्रियते प्रत्यक्षेण विशेषतः ||'.

Bhishma, not heeding *Karna's* protestations tells him referring as सूतपुत्र, that had it not been for the great responsibility which he has undertaken, he would have put an end to his childish talk and life. *Karna* stands angry with his eyes spitting fire, and replies that only when battle with *Arjuna* begins who

will escape death. Seeing his two closest centres of power becoming antagonistic with each other, *Duryodhana* intervenes requesting both of them to calm down since rancor never brings success.

As was the practice in that era, prior to the commencement of battle representatives of both *Panadvas* and *Kauravas* decide the rules of the War. *Firstly*, each day will be stooped the moment the Sun sets, soldiers of both expressing friendly feelings towards each other. *Secondly*, if any one is skilled in war of words then he will distance himself from the battle without participating or being killed. *Thirdly*, a charioteer would fight only with another charioteer, one mounted on elephant would fight another similarly mounted, one on horse would fight similarly placed and foot soldier would fight with another foot soldier. *Fourthly*, each one will inform the other the skill which he possesses. *Fifthly*, if one withdraws from the battle frightened then no weapons will be used on such one. *Sixthly*, if one surrenders or runs away from the battle, or if his armour is broken, then such one would not be killed. *Seventhly*, the persons who attend horses, carry armaments or heavy burden, or whose duty is to blow the conch at the end of the day would not be killed. After deciding the rules, the great ones depart to their respective camps with clear mind and delighted to fight 'निविश्य च महात्मानास्ते पुरुषर्षभाः | हृष्टरूपाः सुमनसो बभूवुः सहसैनिकाः ||'.

Seeing that the defining moment has arrived for *Dhritarashtra's* sons and others, *Vyasa* informs him not to mourn what is destined to happen under the influence of *Time*. If he needs to observe the brave deeds of his sons, he will provide him sight to see the events with his own eyes 'राजन्परीतकालास्ते पुत्राश्चान्ये च पार्थिवाः | ते हिंसन्तीव संग्रामे समासाद्येतरेतरम्|| तेषु कालपरीतेषु विनश्यत्स्वेव भारत | कालपर्यायमाज्ञाय मा स्म शोके मनः कृथाः || यदि चेच्छसि संग्रामे द्रष्टुमेनान्विशाम्पते | चक्षुर्ददानि ते पुत्र युद्धं तत्र निशामय ||'. But *Dhritarashtra* declines the offer preferring to listen to the events. Whereupon *Sanjaya* is graced with supra-sensory vision, so that he can narrate all the events, whether seen or unseen, during or during night. As far as *Vyasa* himself is concerned, he will see that the glory of the *Kauravas* and *Pandavas* will spread in all the quarters - 'न रोचये ज्ञातिवधं द्रष्टुं ब्रह्मर्षिसत्तम | युद्धमेतत् त्वशेषेण शृणुयां तव तेजसा ||...एष ते संजयो राजन्युद्धमेतद्वदिष्यति | एतस्य सर्वसंग्रामे न परोक्षं भविष्यति || चक्षुषा संजयो राजन्दिव्येनैव समन्वितः | कथयिष्यति ते युद्धं सर्वज्ञश्च भविष्यति || प्रकाशं वाप्रकाशं वा दिवा वा यदि वा निशि | मनसा चिन्तितमपि सर्वं वेत्स्यति संजयः || अहं तु कीर्तिमेतेषां कुरूणां भरतर्षभ | पाण्डवानां च सर्वेषां प्रथयिष्यामि मा शुचः ||'.

Vyasa then seeing many omens appearing like asses being born in cows womb and sons reveling in the company of their mothers etc., he pronounces that *Time* has taken descent in the form of his sons - 'कालोऽयं पुत्ररूपेण तव जातो विशांपते |'. Therefore, he cautions that neither destruction of *vedic* wisdom is extolled nor killing is commended. Family reputation is like the body and *Dharma* destroys one who injures it. Therefore, when he was obliged to perform righteous actions, *Dhritarashtra* has been performing unrighteous actions disregarding the effect of the *Time*. To bring out destruction of your family and those of others, improbity is being done in the country. *Dhritarashtra's* sense of righteousness is completely vanished. What has he to do with his land and possessions ! Why does he keep the kingdom and collect demerits. If he performs righteousness he would gain success, fame and the heavens. Pandavas will have their share and his country will have peace 'कालोऽयं पुत्ररूपेण तव जातो विशाम्पते | न वधः पूज्यते वेदे हितं नैव कथंचन || हन्यात्स एवं यो हन्यात्कुलधर्मं स्विकां तनुम्| कालेनोत्पथगन्तासि शक्ये सति यथाऽऽपदि || कुलस्यास्य विनाशाय तथैव च महीक्षिताम्| अनर्थो राज्यरूपेण तवजातो विशाम्पते || लुप्तधर्मा परेणासि धर्मं दर्शय वै सुतान्| किं ते राज्येन दुर्धर्ष येन प्राप्तोऽसि किल्बिषम्|| यशो धर्मं च कीर्तिं च पालयन्स्वर्गमाप्स्यसि | लभन्तां पाण्डवा राज्यं शमं गच्छन्तु कौरवाः ||'.

Even as *Vyasa* was advising him, *Dhritarashtra* having earlier remarked 'दिष्टमेतत्पुरा मन्ये भविष्यति नरक्षयः || replies with resignation that even as *Vyasa* knows what is good and what is bad, know that being attached to the primordial world he should know that he too have fallen under that influence - 'यथा भवान्वेत्ति तथैव वेत्ता भावाभावौ विदितौ मे यथार्थौ | स्वार्थे हि सम्मुह्यति तात लोको मा चापि लोकात्मकमेव विद्धि || ..न चापि ते मद्विधा महर्षे ना चाधर्मं कर्तुमर्हो हि मे मतिः ||'.

When *Kauravas* descend on the *Kurukshetra* field, *Bhishma* was seen standing on the forefront of the army which was as vast and extensive like the roaring sea which many rulers gathered

with their powerful armies 'महारथौघविपुलः समुद्रवघोपवान्| भीष्मेण धार्तराष्ट्राणांव्यूहः प्रत्यङ्मुखो युधि ||'. When *Yudhishthira* sees the enormous gathering of soldiers ready to fight for *Kauravas*, *Yudhishthira* becomes reflective, whether they succeed in defeating the formidable opponent, with *Bhishma* as the commander - 'बृहतीं धार्तराष्ट्रस्य सेनां दृष्ट्वा समुद्यताम्| विषादमगमद् राजा कुन्तीपुत्रो युधिष्ठिरः || धनंजय कथं शक्यमस्माभिर्योद्धुमाहवे | धार्तराष्ट्रैर्महाबाहो येषां योद्धा पितामहः ||'. 'But *Arjuna* assures him that it is not strength or brave deeds but truth, nobility, righteousness and enthusiasm that win the war. *Brahma* had advised the gods in earlier times to fight giving up unrighteousness, greed and attachment because where there is *Dharma*, there surely victory is. Therefore, it does not suit you to be despondent when he knows that *Krishna* is always on his side 'न तथा बलवीर्याभ्यां जयन्ति विजिगीषवः | यथा सत्यानृशंस्याभ्यां धर्मेणैवोद्यमेन च || त्यक्त्वाधर्मं च लोभं च मोहं चोद्यममास्थिताः | युद्ध्यध्वमनहंकारा यतो धर्मस्ततो जयः || एवं राजन्विजानीहि ध्रुवोऽस्माकं रणे जयः | यथा तु नारदः प्राह यतः कृष्णस्ततो जयः || गुणभूतो जयः कृष्णे पृष्ठतोऽभ्येति माधवम्| तद्यथा विजयश्चास्य सन्नतिश्चापरो || अनन्ततेजा गोविन्दः शत्रुपूगेषु निर्व्यथः | पुरुषः सनातनमयो यतः कृष्णस्ततो जयः || गुणभूतो जयः कृष्णे पृष्ठतोऽभ्येति माधवम्| तद्यथा विजयश्चास्य सन्नतिश्चापरो गुणः ||..तस्य ते न व्यथां कञ्चिदिह पश्यामि भारत | यस्य ते जयमाशास्ते विश्वभुक्त्रिदिवेश्वरः ||'.

Hearing these words, *Yudhishthira* arranged his battalions accordingly, with *Arjuna* sitting with his *Gandeeva* bow in one hand and the chariot being drawn by *Krishna*. At that moment *Krishna* points out *Bhishma* to him saying shining like an enraged lion *Bhishma* is looking at the *Panadvas* sitting yonder in chariot 'य एष रोषात्प्रतपन् बलस्थो यो नः सेनां सिंह इवेक्षते च | स एष भीष्मः कुरुवंशकेतुर्येनाहतास्त्रिशतं वाजिमेधाः ||'. Then as suggested by *Krishna* he dismounts and prays goddess *Durga* who blesses him saying that soon the war will begin and he will win the enemies. He verily is *Nara* and his companion is *Narayana*. Therefore, on the battlefield he would be unconquerable even for *Indra* 'स्वल्पेनैव तु कालेन शत्रूञ्जेष्यसि पाण्डव | नरस्त्वमसि दुर्धर्ष नारायणसहायवान || अजेयस्त्वं रणेऽरीणामपि वज्रभृतः स्वयम्|'. After giving the blessings, the goddess vanished from sight and *Arjuna* pleased with the grace climbed his chariot even as both he and *Krishna* blew their conches 'इत्येवमुक्त्वा वरदा क्षणेनान्तरधीयत || लब्ध्वा वरं तु कौन्तेयो मेने विजयमात्मनः | आरुरोह ततः पार्थो रथं परमसम्मतम्|| कृष्णार्जुनावेकरथौ दिव्यौशङ्खौ प्रदध्मतुः |'. *Sanjaya* tells *Dhritarashtra* that he came to know this with the grace given to him by *Vyasa*. His evil minded sons being under obscurity did not realize the divine descent of *Krishna* and *Arjuna*. Being under the delusion induced by *Time*, they did not listen to the wise words when they were spoken to them. Wherever there is righteousness, intelligence, grace and splendour there surely is *Krishna* and wherever he is there assuredly is success 'एतदृष्टं प्रसादात्तु मया व्यासस्य धीमातः || मोहादेतौ नजानन्ति नरनारायणवृषी | तव पुत्रा दुरात्मानः सर्वेमन्युवशानुगाः || प्राप्तकालमिदं वाक्यं कालपाशेन गुठिताः | यत्र धर्मो द्युतिः कान्तिर्यत्र ह्रीः श्रीस्तथा मतिः | यतो धर्मस्ततः कृष्णो यतः कृष्णस्ततो जयः ||'.

The self-sense and attachment to sons do not desert *Dhritarashtra* even on this historic moment in *Time*. Seeing both armies gathered on the battle field, *Dhritarashtra* asks *Sanjaya* who among both, *Kauravas* and *Pandavas*, whom he once described as 'यथैव पाण्डोः पुत्रास्तु यथैवाभ्यधिका मम |' commenced the first charge - 'के पूर्वं प्राहरंस्तत्र युद्धे हृदयकम्पने | मामकाः पान्डवाय व तन्ममावक्ष्व संजय ||' and later what they did on the battle field - 'धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे समवेता ययुत्सवः | मामकाः पाण्डवाश्चेव किमकुर्वत संजय ||'. And *Sanjaya* duty bound to master commences his narration.

A true blue-blooded *Kshatriya* who comes on the battle field rarely is concerned with empirical considerations, only धर्म and the need to perform one's actions according to attributes (गुण) and inclinations (स्वभाव) dominating the intent and purpose of the warriors standing thereon. It is battle between forces of *Light* and those of *Darkness*, the *divine principle*, *Krishna*, alone standing as the *Witness*, the *Arbiter*, the cause and the culmination, *Time* grown mature, for determining and destroying the forces inimical to the rule of ऋत, *the cosmic law*.

When *Arjuna* came on the battle field, he had neither any inhibitions nor qualms about fighting even encouraging *Yudhishthira* that 'न तथा बलवीर्याभ्यां जयन्ति विजिगीषवः | यथा सत्यानृशंस्याभ्यां धर्मेणैवोद्यमेन च ||'. But *Vyasa* uses the occasion, to deal with the human problems where often mind sees events as dual and polar, each completely opposite to each other, with intellect kept in abeyance. *Arjuna* is the progeny of *Indra*, the deity presiding over mind, and where mind is dominant there arise doubts, dilemma, using rationality to

suggest the most unreasonable propositions. Life is neither dual nor polar but one comprehensive whole, like *Krishna* the *divine principle* witnessing and representing the comprehensive whole. The individual will never understand the whole so long as he keeps his individual identity separate. The individual will never know the whole unless the individual gives way to the divine, even as the drop of the water would not know ocean unless and until it becomes dissolved in the ocean.

As long as Arjuna sees the warriors arrayed before him as fathers, grand-fathers, teachers, uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons and companions he operates on the plane of duality. And *Upanishads* says where there is duality, there one smells another, one sees another, one hears another, one speaks to another, one thinks of another, one understands another. Where every thing has become the *Self*, the whole, complete and entirety, then by what and whom should one smell, see, hear, speak to, think of and understand other. Every one in the universe, conscious of its own distinct identity and individuality, thinks that they determine their destiny, without realizing that they can at best shape the destiny but can never the one who decides it. They are like the straw that floats on the river, thinking that it is the straw that decides the course by which it flows, without being consciously aware that it is the river that takes the straw to the ocean. Therefore, *Krishna* leads *Arjuna* gradually step by step, from stage to stage, from the empirical and practical to the spiritual and metaphysical to know the unknown essence in life and surrender to the supreme *Prime Existence*, which in the final analysis is अक्षितम indestructible, अच्युतम unshaken and प्राणसंस्थितम् the very essence of life making *Arjuna* the instrument निमित्तमात्र in fulfilling the *Will* of the whole, the *Will* of the *Prime Existence*, the divine intent and purpose 'देवनाना हि यत्कार्यम्'. What follow thereafter is the great testimony and testament of enlightened spiritual vision in the form of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

Here on the temporal level, seeing that armies are arrayed and warriors are ready for the battle, *Yudhishthira*, image of धर्म - righteousness and सदाचार - good conduct that he is, removes his armour and divests himself from all arms before the first arrow is shot. Then he walks quietly without speaking a word towards where *Bhishma* was surrounded by the massive army of the *Kauarvas*. 'ततो युधिष्ठिरं दृष्ट्वा युद्धाय समवस्थितं | तं सैन्यं सागरप्रख्यं मुहुः प्रचलितं नृपः || विमुच्य कवचं वीरो निक्षिप्य च वरायुधम्| अवरुह्य रथात्तूर्णं पद्भ्यामेव कृताञ्जलिः || पितामहमभिप्रेक्ष्य धर्मराजो युधिष्ठिरः | वाग्यतः प्रययौ येन प्राङ्मुखो रिपुवाहिनीम्||'. His brothers instinctively follow him wondering what could possibly in his mind. Only *Krishnu* was seen smiling knowingly and approvingly, 'अभिप्रायोऽस्य विज्ञातो मयेति प्रहसन्निव' of the ancient practice that requires one to take blessings from one's preceptors and elders before commencing any new enterprise - 'श्रूयते हि पुराकल्पे गुरूननुमान्य यः | युध्यते स भवेद्व्यक्तमपध्यातोमहत्तरैः ||'.

Kauravas who were oblivious of this ancient tradition, mistook *Yudhishthira*, who having become frightened of their strength has come to sue for peace and surrender, 'दृष्ट्वा युधिष्ठिरं दूराद्धार्तराष्ट्रस्य सैनिकाः | मिथः संकथयाञ्चक्रुर्नेषां हि कुलपांसनः || व्यक्तं भीत इवाभ्येति राजासौ भीष्ममन्तिकम्| युधिष्ठिरः ससोदर्यः शरणार्थं प्रयाचकः ||'. But their surprise soon transformed to stupefaction and confusion seeing *Yudhishthira* seek *Bhishma's* permission to begin the battle 'आमन्त्रये त्वां दुर्धर्ष त्वया योत्स्यामहे सह | अनुजानीहि मां तात आशिषश्च प्रयोजय ||' and भीष्म overcome with affection replies that he would have become displeased wishing his defeat if he had not come. He now wishes him glory in the battle and desires fulfilled - 'यद्येवं नाभिगच्छेथा युधि मां पृथिवीपते | शपेयं त्वां महाराज पराभावाय भारत || प्रीतोऽहं पुत्र युध्यस्व जयमाप्नुहि पाण्डव | यत्तेऽभिलषितं चान्यत्तदवाप्नुहि संयुगे ||'.

Bhishma, overwhelmed by this noble gesture, becomes apologetic remarking that a person is slave to the wealth and possessions, therefore, bound by temporal obligations to *Kauravas* he has taken up arms helplessly to fight for *Duryodhana*. 'अर्थस्य पुरुषो दासो दासस्त्वर्थो न कस्यचित्| इति सत्यं महाराज बद्धोऽस्म्यर्थेन कौरवैः || अतस्त्वां क्लीबवद् वाक्यं ब्रवीमि कुरुनन्दन | भृतोऽस्म्यर्थेन कौरव्य युद्धादन्यत्किमिच्छसि ||'. *Yudhishthira* is the epitome of humility and generosity, requesting that he should continue to advise him even while fighting on *Duryodhana's* sides 'मन्त्रयस्व महाबाहो हितैषी मम नित्यशः | युध्यस्व कौरवस्यार्थे ममैष सततं वरः || कथं जयेयं संग्रामे भवन्तमपराजितम्| . . . ब्रवीतु यदि श्रेयः त्वमात्मनः समरे परैः ||'.

Some of the things which appear in *Mahabharata* appear as strange in the present age where temporal purpose dominates the spiritual intent. For instance the case where knowing *Bhishma's* death

was depended on his own *Will* and no one being capable to kill him on the battle field except perhaps *Arjuna* - 'नैन पश्यामि कौन्तेय यो मां युध्यन्तमाहवे | विजयेत्पुमान्कश्चित्साक्षादपि शतक्रतुः ||', *Yudhishthira* pleads to tell how else could he be killed - 'हन्त पृच्छामि तस्मात्त्वां पितामह नमोऽस्तु ते | वधोपायं ब्रवीहि त्वमात्मनः समरे परैः ||'. *Bhishma* then promptly tells him that the time for him to die has not yet arrived therefore he should come again to know the secret.

When *Yudhishthira* approaches his teacher *Drona* for blessings, he too tells him if he had not come for his blessings he too would have desired his defeat, but now that he has come, he blesses fro his success, even though he fights for him. But he too fights for *Kauravas* being under their obligations 'यदिमां नाभिगच्छेथा युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः | शपेयं त्वां महाराज पराभवाय सर्वशः || अनुजानामि युध्यस्व विजयं समवाप्नुहि ||..योत्स्येऽहं कौरवस्यार्थे तवाशास्यो जये मया ||'. When *Yudhishthira* asks him the secret of his death, he tells him that he cannot be defeated so long he is in the chariot and armed. Only if he lays down his arms listening any extremely unpleasant news, then alone he can be killed 'न तेऽस्ति विजयस्तावद्यावद्युद्ध्याम्यहं रणे |..न शत्रुं तात पश्यामि यो मां हन्याद्रथे स्थितम्| युध्यमानं सुसंरब्धं शरवर्षौघवर्षिणम्|| ऋते प्रायगतं राजन्न्यस्तशस्त्रमचेतनम्| हन्यान्मां युधि योधानां सत्यमेतद्ब्रवीमि ते ||'. Similar replies are given by *Kripa* and *Shalya*, the latte assuring that as the charioteer to *Karna* he will try his best to minimize his enthusiasm in his battles.

When *Krishna* comes to know that *Karna* would not be on the battle field, as long as *Bhishma* is the commander of the army, he tries to poison his mind asking whether it is true that due to *Bhishma's* hatred for him, he would not be fighting. Therefore, would it agreeable for him to fight on behalf of *Pandavas* and then go back to *Kauravas* once *Bhishma* is killed if he so desires 'श्रुतं मे कर्ण भीष्मस्य द्वेषात्किल न योत्स्यसे | अस्मान् वरय राधेय यावद्भीष्मो न हन्यते || हते तु भीष्मे राधेय पुनरेष्यसि संयुगम्| धार्तराष्ट्रस्य साहाय्यं यदि पश्यसि चेत्समम्||'. On the face, *Krishna's* move appears immoral, unethical and deceitful. But as shrewd diplomatic move, he seems to be testing whether his own and latter *Kunti's* encounter had any psychological effect on *Karna*. It did neither surprise nor disappont *Krishna* when *Karna* refused emphatically to entertain any such thoughts 'न विप्रियं करिष्यामि धार्तराष्ट्रस्य केशव | त्यक्तप्राणं हि मां विद्धि दुर्योधनहितैषिणम्||'. Impressed by his noble words *Krishna* returns back to *Pandava's* camp. It is not for nothing that *Karna* is referred as *Krishna* of the *Kaurvas*.

It is not that *Dhritarashtra's* all sons were evil and all supported *Duryodhana* in his unrighteous deeds. There were some rare ones with a glimmer of luminosity like *Vikarna*, as lotus blooming in mire, who had opposed *Duryodhana* him when *Draupadi* was being humiliated. Therefore, when the times come for final encounter, *Yudhishthira* made a dramatic appeal to *Kaurava* brothers to desert *Duryodhana* and fight on their behalf. *Yuyutsu* one of the hundred *Kaurava* who had on an earlier occasion objected to *Draupadi* being humiliated, comes forward deserting *Duryodhana* to fight on *Yudhishthira* behalf. *Yudhishthira* welcomes this step with a hope that at least one of the *Kaurava* brothers will remain alive to perform the funeral rites for *Dhritarashtra* and offer oblations to the ancestors 'एह्येहि सर्वे योत्स्यामस्तव भ्रातॄनपण्डितान्| युयुत्सो वासुदेवश्च वयं च ब्रूम सर्वशः || वृणोमि महाबाहो युद्ध्यस्व ममकारणात्| त्वयी पिण्डश्च तन्तुश्च धृतराष्ट्रस्य दृश्यते ||'.

Chapter VIII

The battle starts with all flourish with sky completely covered with clouds of dust concealing the Sun from one's view- 'उभयोः सेनायोस्तैवः सैन्यानां स समागमः | अन्तार्धीयत चादित्यः सैन्येन रजसावृतः ||'. The war which lasts for eighteen days making every one knowingly or unknowingly a pawn or instrument in the massive यज्ञ - 'महानयं कृष्ण क्षत्रस्य समुदानयः |' as *Karna* puts it, in which *Krishna* was the *Witness* as well as the presiding priest - 'अस्य यज्ञस्य वेत्ता' 'आध्वर्य वं च', for which he had taken descent establishing himself in *Prakriti* - 'प्रकृतीं स्वामधिष्ठाय', stationing himself in each one's heart and directing their actions like machine 'ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति | भ्रामयन्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ||' to fulfill the *divine intent* and *purpose* - 'देवतानां यत्कार्यम्', each great deed of the warriors being on the lips of people as long as mountains stand and rivers flow.

Of the eighteen days, the first ten days were dominated by *Bhishma,* leading *Kaurava* armies on the battle field when great destruction on *Pandava,* was caused many even deserting the field seeing his brave deeds - 'हते विप्रद्रुते सैन्ये निरुत्साहे विमर्दिते | हाहाकारो महानासीत्पाण्डुसैन्येषु भारत ||.. भीष्मं च समुदीर्यन्तं दृष्ट्वा पार्थो महाहवे | अवहारमकुर्वन्त सैन्यानां भरतर्षभ ||'. Seeing *Duryodhana* expresses him pleasure, *Yudhishthira* becomes despondent offering even to go to forests for penance and asking *Krishna* to find out some else to lead the *Pandavas* - 'न तु भीष्मं महातेजाः शक्यो जेतुं महाबले |..वनं यास्यामि वार्ष्णेय श्रेयो मे तत्र जीवितुम्|| न त्विमान्पृथिवीपालान्दातु भीष्माय मृत्यवे ||..मत्कृते भ्रातृहार्दात राज्याद्भ्रष्टास्तदा सुखात्| जीवितं बहुमन्येऽहं जीवितं ह्यद्य दुर्लभम्|| जीवितस्य च शेषेण तपस्तप्स्यामि दुश्चरम्| न घातयिष्यामि रणे मित्राणीमानि केशव ||..एको भीमः परं शक्त्या युध्यत्येव महाभुजः |'. His regret was that in given circumstances, righteous battle would not bring any success even for *Bhima* fighting for hundred years. Even *Arjuna's* divine weapons appearing ineffective before *Bhishma*, therefore *Krishna* should search for one else who can silence *Bhishma* - 'नालमेव क्षयं कर्तुं परसैन्यस्य मारिष | आर्जवेन युद्धेन वीर वर्षशतैरपि || एकोऽस्त्रवित्सखा तेऽयं सोऽप्यस्मानुपेक्षते |..दिव्यास्त्राणि भीष्मस्य द्रोणस्य च महात्मनः | धक्ष्यन्तिक्षत्रियान्सर्वान्प्रयुक्तानि पुनः पुनः ||..स त्वं पश्य महाभाग योगेश्वर महारथम्| भीष्मं यः शमयेत्संख्ये दावाग्निं जलदो यथा ||'.

Listening to these words, *Krishna* cheers him not to worry, saying that his brothers are quite competent besides he too has their success at his heart, besides *Satyaki, Virata* and *Drupada* are others their well-wishers, *Bhishma's* death by *Shikhandi* is undoubtedly fated in the presence of all warriors - 'मा शुचो भरतश्रेष्ठ न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि | . .शिखण्डी च महाबाहो भीष्मस्य निधनं किल | करिष्यति न संदेहो नृपाणां युधि पश्यताम्||'. Hearing these words, *Yudhishthira* composed in his courage, spoke to *Drishtadhyumna* in *Krishna's* presence, not to over look his words that he has been appointed at the instance of *Krishna* therefore, he should not forget that like *Kartikeya* led the gods in earlier times, he has now lo lead *Pandavas*.

At the end of the second day picture changes with *Pandavas* having upper hand over *Kaurava* armies. Seeing this *Duryodhana* becomes displeased, holding *Bhishma* and *Drona's* affection for *Pandavas* being the reason for failure. He protests if this was conveyed by them to him earlier, he would have appointed *Karna* instead to lead his armies 'न पाण्डवान्पर्तिबलास्तव मन्ये कथंचन | तथा द्रोणस्य संग्रामे द्रौणेश्चैव कृपस्य च || अनुग्राह्याः पाण्डुसुतास्तव नूनं पितामह | यत्क्षमां क्षमसे वीर वध्यमानां वरूथिनीम्|| सोऽस्मि वाच्यस्त्वया राजन्पूर्वमेव समागमे | न योत्स्ये पाण्डवान्संख्ये नापि पार्षतसात्यकी || श्रुत्वा तु वचनं तुभ्यमाचार्यस्य कृपस्य च | कर्णेन सहितः कृत्यं चिन्तयानस्तदैव हि ||'. *Bhishma,* though hurt, smiles at his impetuous display, angrily pointing out that he had already told cautioned him that *Arjuna* cannot be defeated even by gods. Therefore, whatever an old man could do in the circumstances all that is being done by him 'एतच्छ्रुत्वा वचो भीष्मः प्रहसन्वै मुहुर्मुहुः | अब्रवीत्तनयं तुभ्यं क्रोधादुद्वृत्य चक्षुषी || बहुशोऽसि मया राजस्तथ्यमुक्तो हितं वचः | अजेयाः पाण्डवा युद्धे देवैरपि सवासवैः || यत्तु शक्यं मया कर्तुं वृद्धेनाद्य नृपोत्तम | करिष्यामि यथाशक्ति प्रेक्षेदानीं सबान्धवः ||'.

On the third day, *Krishna* sees *Bhishma* fighting with extraordinary valour even putting tremour in the soldiers, even making him visibly shaken, 'वार्ष्णेय च शरैस्तीक्ष्णैः कम्पयामास रोषितः |' while *Arjuna* appears to hesitate to engage in battle with *Bhishma* who is causing untold damage to *Pandava's* armies - 'ततस्तु कृष्णः समरे दृष्ट्वा भीष्मपराक्रमम्| सम्प्रेक्ष्य च महाबाहुः पार्थस्य मृदुयुद्धताम्|| भीष्मं च शरवर्षाणि सृजन्तमनिशं युधि | प्रतपन्तमिवादित्यं मध्यमासाद्य सेनयोः

वगन्वगनर्विनिघ्नन्तं पाण्डुपुत्रस्य सैनिकान्। युगन्तमिव कुर्वाणं भीष्मं यौधिष्ठरे वले ||'. *Krishna* could not suffer to see the mass estruction of soldiers in *Pandava's* soldiers by *Bhishma* and therefore, reflected that when in one battle ven gods and *asuras* could be defeated hum him what to talk of *Pandavas* - 'अमृश्यमाणो भगवान्केशवः परवीरहा | चिन्तयदमेयातमा नास्ति यौधिष्ठरं वलम्|| एकाह्ना हि रणे भीष्मो नाशयेद्देवदानवान्| किं नु पाण्डुसुतान् युद्धे सवलान्सपदानुगान्||'. Therefore, seeing hat respecting *Bhishma, Arjuna* is not fulfilling his धर्म, he apparently decides to enter the fray and take he responsibility overlooking momentarily his promise to *Duryodhana* that he will not participate in he war, 'सोऽहं भीष्मं निहन्म्यद्य पाण्डवार्थाय दंशितः || भारमेतं विनेष्यामि पाण्डवानां महात्मनाम्| अर्जुनो हि शरैस्तीक्ष्णैर्वध्यमानोऽपि संयुगे || कर्तव्यं नाभिजानाति रणे भीष्मस्य गौरवात्|'.

Even as *Krishna* was thus considering the next move, *Bhishma* showered angrily many arrows on *Arjuna's* chariot, in such abandon that they enveloped all the quarters, the space, all directions; neither the earth below nor the Sun above was to be seen, terrible storm shaking the surroundings 'तथा चिन्तयतस्तस्य भूय एव पितामहः | प्रेषयामास संक्रुद्धः शरान्पार्थरथं प्रति || तेषां बहुत्वात् तु भृशं शरणां दिशाश्च सर्वाः पिहिता बभूवुः | न चान्तरिक्षं न दिशो न भूमिर्न भास्करोऽदृश्यत रश्मिमाली | ववुश्च वातास्तुमुलाः सधूमा दिशाश्च सर्वाः क्षुभिता बभूवुः || तेषां बहुत्वात्तु भृशं शरणां दिशाश्च सर्वाः पिहिता बभुवुः | न चान्तरिक्ष न दिशो न भूमिर्न भास्करोऽदृश्यत रश्मिमाली | ववुश्च वातास्तुमुलाः सधूमादिशश्च सर्वाः क्षुभिता बभूवुः ||'. Seeing the great spectacle, soldiers run hysterically seeing *Arjuna* becoming soft and refusing to fight his grandsire with determination and *Bhishma* becoming more and more his tormentor.

Seeing the great commotion, with soldiers dispersing to all directions, *Krishna* spoke glowingly to *Satyaki* about *Bhishma's* valour and telling him let all the soldiers desert the battle but he himself alone will pull down both *Bhishma* and *Drona* from their chariots and install *Yudhishthira* on the throne - 'आमृष्यमाणः स ततो महात्मा यशस्विनं सर्वदशार्हभर्ता | उवाच शैनेयमभिप्रशंसन्दृष्ट्वा कुरुनापततः समग्रान्|| ये यान्ति ते यान्तु शिनिप्रवीर येऽपि स्थिताः सात्वत तेऽपि यान्तु | भीष्मं रथात्पश्य निपात्यमानं द्रोणं च संख्ये सगणं मयाद्य || न मे रथी सात्वत कौरवाणां क्रुद्धस्य मुच्येत रणेऽद्य कश्चित्| तस्मादहं गृह्य रथाङ्गमुग्रं प्राणं हरिष्यामि महाव्रतस्य || निहत्य भीष्मं सगणं तथाऽऽजौ द्रोणं च शैनेय रथप्रवीरौ | प्रीतिं करिष्यामि धनंजयस्य राज्ञश्च भीमस्य तथाश्विनोश्च || निहत्य सर्वान्धृतराष्ट्रपुत्रांस्तत्पक्षिणो ये च नरेन्द्रमुख्याः | राज्येन राजानमजातशत्रुं सम्पादयिष्याम्यहमद्य हृष्टः ||'. Saying thus he climbed down from the chariot with his discus in hand and rushed towards *Bhishma* with his dress flashing like lightening in the sky 'सोऽभिवदवन् भीष्ममनीकमध्ये क्रुद्धो महान्द्रवरजः प्रमथो | व्यालम्बिपीताम्बरऽश्चकाशे धनो यथा खे तडितावनद्धः || सुदर्शनं चास्य रराज शौरेस्तच्चक्रपद्मं सुभुजोरुनालम्| यदादिपद्मं तरुणार्कवर्णं रराज नारायणनाभिजातम्||'.

This may seem aberration in *Krishna's* behaviour which seems to tilted heavily on the side of *Pandavas*, performing actions which are patently appear unrighteous when he as *divine being* is by his own statement come to establish righteousness where unrighteousness prevails extensively. While many including *Arjuna,* his closest ally, saw *Krishna* performing actions which are contrary to his promise to *Duryodhana* that he will not take up arms during the battle, therefore unrighteous, it was only *Bhishma* who saw him as the peer of the divine beings, luminous as the creator, preserver and destroyer envelops the entire creation, who like a great storm was approaching furiously towards him, uprooting trees in its trail, for taking sides influenced by temporal considerations on behalf of the evil forces. He knows for certain that death in the hands of such supreme Person will ensure him not only the immortal worlds but also fame in the mortal primordial world.

Therefore, when *Bhishma* saw *Krishna* approaching him he was enthralled and mesmerized, exclaiming without any slightest fear, *Come my Lord come. Obeisance to you. O, protector of the worlds. Strike me down this day on the battle field. That will be certainly be supreme grace on me and will enhance my worth in the three worlds* 'तमापतन्तं प्रगृहीतचक्रं दृष्ट्वा देवं शान्तानवस्तदानीम्| असम्भ्रमं तद्विचकर्ष दोर्भ्यां महाधनुर्गाण्डीवतुल्यघोषम्|| उवाच भीष्मस्तमनन्तपौरुषं गोविन्दमाजावविमूढचेताः | एहेहि देवेश जगन्निवास नमोऽस्तु ते माधव चक्रपाणे || प्रसह्य मां पातय लोकनाथ रथोत्तमात्सर्वशरण्य संख्ये || त्वया हतस्यापि ममाद्य कृष्ण श्रेयः परस्मिन्निह चैव लोके | सम्भावितोऽस्म्यन्धकवृष्णिनाथ लोकैस्त्रिभिर्वीर तवाभियानात्||'. Seeing *Krishna* take such extreme step, armies on both sides trembled even as *Arjuna* rushed after him, falling at his feet reverentially when he was but a little distance from *Bhishma,* pleading him to restrain his anger and promising to perform his duties as desired by him 'रथादवप्लुत्य ततस्त्वरावान्पार्थोऽप्यनुद्रुत्य यदुप्रवीरम्| जग्राह पीनोत्तमलम्बवाहुं बाह्वोर्हरिं व्यायतपीनबाहुः ||..पार्थस्तु विष्टभ्य बलेन पादौ भीष्मान्तिकं तूर्णमभिद्रवन्तम्| बलान्निजग्राह हरिं किरीटी पदेऽथ राजन्दशमे

कथञ्चित्||..उवाच कोपं प्रतिसंहरति गतिर्भवान्केशव पाण्डवानाम्|| न हास्यते कर्म यथाप्रतिज्ञं पुत्रैः शपे केशव सोदरैश्च | अन्तं करिष्यामि यथा कुरूणां त्वयाहमिन्द्रानुज सम्प्रयुक्तः ||'.

Hearing these words *Krishna* was exceedingly pleased and climbed his chariot again, but not showing any laxity in his attempt remaining still endowed with his discus and blew his conch *Panchajanya* to encourage and initiate sense of moral indignation in *Arjuna*, seeing which there was a great commotion in *Kaurava's* army - 'रथं सचक्रः पुनरारुरोह || स तानभीषूनपुनर्गदादानः प्रगृह्य शङ्खं द्विषतां निहन्ता | निनदयामास्य ततो दिशश्च स पाञ्चजन्यस्य रवेण शौरिः ||...प्रगृहीतशङ्खं विचुक्रुशुः प्रेक्ष्य कुरुप्रवीराः ||'.

The war goes on unabated and by the close of the fourth day of the war, *Bhishma* kills hundreds of warriors on *Pandavas* side, *Pandavas* too returning the damage killing *Dhritarashtra's* many sons. Seeing the great valour shown by *Panadvas*, *Dhritarashtra* becomes disturbed in mind, wondering how the success of his sons could be assured, lamenting that *Vidura's* words seem to be coming true and every thing seems to be fated in that manner 'पुत्राणां च पराभावं श्रुत्वा संजय सर्वशः | चिन्ता मे महती सूत भविष्यति कथं स्थिति || ध्रुवं विदुरवाक्यानि धक्ष्यन्ति हृदयं मम | यथा हि दृश्यते सर्वं दैवयोगेन संजय ||'.

Duryodhana is also disturbed by the events and again asks *Bhishma* pointedly, why is it that when great warriors like him, *Drona, Kripa, Shalya* are sufficient to defeat *Pandavas*, many of his brothers have to die, making him wonder which could be the driving force behind their success - 'त्रयाणामपि लोकानां पर्याप्ता इति मे मतिः | पाण्डवानां समस्ताश्च नातिष्ठन्त पराक्रमे || तत्र मे संशयो जातस्तन्ममाचक्ष्व पृच्छतः | य समाश्रित्य कौन्तेया जयन्त्यस्मान्क्षणे क्षणे |' *Bhishma* tells him that he has already told him earlier but he seems not to listen to him. There is no one in the world nor would there be any one in future who can defeat *Arjuna*, protected as he is by *Krishna*, who as *Prajapati* had told gods, is no one other than *Narayana* born as human along with नर - *Arjuna* for destroying the *asuras* 'मानुषं लोकमाविष्ट वासुदेव इति श्रुतः | असुराणा वधार्थाय सम्भवस्य महीतले || संग्रामे निहता ये ते दैत्यदानवराक्षसाः | त इमे नृषु सम्भूता घोररूपा महाबलाः || तेषां वधार्थं भगवान्नरेण सहितो वशी | मानुषीं योनिमास्थाय चरिष्यति महीतले ||'. *Bhishma* tells him that he had also heard of this even from *Parashurama*, *Markandeya*, *Vyasa* and *Narada* also.

He concludes that perhaps *Duryodhana* himself is a cruel *rakshasa*, because like them his intelligence is also enveloped by obscurity and hate *Krishna* and *Arjuna* who are नर and नारायण. Or who else would have hated them? - 'मन्ये त्वां राक्षसं क्रूरं यथा चासि तमोवृतः || यस्माद्विद्विषसे गोविन्द पाण्डवं च धनंजयम्| नरनारायणौ देवौ कोऽन्यो द्विष्याद्धि मानवः ||'. *Krishna* is of all comprehensive devoid of all obscure inclinations. By his grace alone are the *Panudavas* protected till now and will also hereafter. He bestows on them the intelligence, strength in war, protecting them from all dangers. The one of whom you inquire of as the reason beyond all their success, know him to be the eternal, all-captivating and auspicious god, known as *Vasudeva* - 'राजन्सर्वमयो ह्येष तमोरागविवर्जितः | यतः कृष्णस्ततो धर्मो यतो धर्मस्ततो जयः || तस्य माहात्म्ययोगेन योगेनात्ममयेन च | धृताः पाण्डुसुता राजञ्जयश्चैषां भविष्यति || श्रेयोयुक्तां सदा बुद्धिं पाण्डवानां दधाति यः | बलं चैव रणे नित्यं भयेभ्यश्चैव रक्षति || स एष शाश्वतो देवः सर्वगुह्यमयः शिवः | वासुदेव इति ज्ञेयो यन्मा पृच्छसि भारत ||'.

Shaken by the vehemence with which *Bhishma* spoke, *Duryodhana* asks him for once about *Krishna's* greatness 'वासुदेवो महद्भूतं सर्वलोकेषु कथ्यते | तस्यागमं प्रतिष्ठां च ज्ञातुमिच्छे पितामह ||. But one thing becomes clear to the reader that what *Bhishma* communicates does not seem to be from his personal experience of *Krishna-Consciousness* but from what was communicated to him by others like *Parashurama*, *Markandeya*, *Vyasa*, *Narada* and others 'रामस्य जामदग्न्यस्य मार्कण्डेयस्य धीमतः | व्यासनारदयोश्चापि सकाशाद्भरतर्षभ ||' concluding that the reason for *Yudhishthira's* success is the grace which *Krishna* has showered on *Pandavas* - 'वासुदेवो महद्भूतं सर्वदैवतदैवतम्| न परं पुण्डरीकाक्षाद्दृश्यते भरतर्षभ || मार्कण्डेयश्च गोविन्दे कथयत्यद्भुतं महत्| सर्वभूतानि भूतात्मा महात्मा पुरुषोत्तमः ||.. केशवः परमं तेजः सर्वलोकपितामहः | एनमाहुर्हृषीकेशं मुनयो वै नराधिप. ||..यश्चैनं भयस्थाने केशवं शरणं व्रजेत्| सदा नरः पठंश्चेदं स्वस्तिमान्स सुखी भवेत्||..स तं युधिष्ठिरो ज्ञात्वा यथातथ्येन भारत | सर्वात्मना महात्मानं केशवं जगदीश्वरम्| प्रपन्नः शरणं राजन् योगानां प्रभुमीश्वरम्||.

Bhishma's oration, however, did not have any influence on *Duryodhana* because the very next day, he approaches *Drona* and asks him why *Pandavas* should succeed when he and *Bhishma* are fighting on his side 'वयं हि त्वां समाश्रित्य भीष्मं चैव पितामहम्| देवानपि रणे जेतुं प्रार्थयामो न संशयः || किमु पाण्डुसुतान्युद्धे हीनवीर्यपराक्रमान्| स तथा कुरु भद्रं ते यथा वध्येरन्न पाण्डवाः ||'. But seeing that *Bhishma's* counseling did not change *Duryodhana's* mind, *Drona* kept silent irritated by his ignorance and arrogance 'एवमुक्तस्ततो द्रोणस्तव पुत्रेण मारिष | उवाच तत्र राजानं संक्रुद्ध इव

नेःश्वसन् |'.

For eight days the war continues, without much satisfaction for *Duryodhana* seeing more and nore of his soldiers dieing, among whom some were his own brothers. He summons *Karna* and *Shakuni* y his side for consultations and tells them *Bhishma*, *Drona*, *Kripa*, *Shalya* and *Somadatta* do not seem o be succeeding containing *Pandavas*, who have created havoc destroying his army. *Karna* agrees that assures him that he should not be depressed because *Bhishma* is unable to defeat *Pandavas* because of his affection to them, though he is fond of battles and desires to win. He assures *Duryodhana* that once *Bhishma* steps aside from the battle field he will himself convincingly defeat them. But he should first tell *Bhishma* to retire from the battlefield 'मा शोच भरतश्रेष्ठ करिष्येऽहं प्रियं तव || भीष्मः शान्तनवस्तूर्णमपयातु महारणात्| निवृत्ते युधि गाङ्गेये न्यस्तशस्त्रे च भारत || अहं पार्थान्हनिष्यामि सहितान्सर्वसोमकैः | पश्यतो युधि भीष्मस्य शपे सत्येन ते नृप || पाण्डवेषु दया नित्यं स हि भीष्मः करोति वै | अशक्तश्च रणे भीष्मो जेतुमेतान्महारथान्|| अभिमानी रणे भीष्मो नित्यं चापि रणप्रियः | स कथं पाण्डवान्युद्धे जेष्यते तात संगतान्|| स त्वं शीघ्रमितो गत्वा भीष्मस्य शिबिरं प्रति | अनुमान्य गुरुं वृद्धं शस्त्रं न्यासय भारत || न्यस्तशस्त्रे ततो भीष्मे निहतान्पश्य पाण्डवान्| मयैकेन रणे राजन्ससुहृद्गणबान्धवान्||'. Thus influenced by the *Karna's* brave words, *Duryodhana* approaches *Bhishma* and requests him with tears in eyes to assure him that he will destroy all those standing by *Pandavas*. And if through compassion for them or aversion for him, he is not able to destroy their strength, then he should permit *Karna* to destroy them 'त्वां वयं समाश्रित्य संयुगे शत्रुसूदन || उत्सहेम रणे हन्तुं सेन्द्रानपि सुरासुरान्| किमु पाण्डुसुतान्वीरान्ससुहृद्गणबन्धवान्||.. अहं सर्वे महाराज निहष्यामि सोमकान्| पञ्चालान्केकयैः सार्धं करूषांश्चेति भारत || तद्वचः सत्यमेवास्तु जहि पार्थान्समागतान्| सोमकांश्च महेश्वासान्सत्यवाग्भव भारत || दयया यदि वा राजन्द्वेष्यभावान्मम प्रभो | मन्दभाग्यतया वापि मम रक्षसि पाण्डवान्|| अनुजानीहि समरे कर्णमाहवशोभिनम्| स जेष्यति रणे पार्थान्ससुहृद्गणबन्धवान्||'.

Hearing these words, *Bhishma* becomes exceedingly hurt and reprimands him asking him why is hurting with words like barbs, when he is doing everything to please him even offering his own life in the battle. Who can kill *Pandavas* protected as th4y are by *Krishna* 'किं त्वं दुर्योधनैवं मां वाक्शल्यैरपकृन्तसि || घटमानं यथाशक्ति कुर्वाणं च तव प्रियम्| जुह्वानं समरे प्राणांस्तव वै प्रियकाम्यया ||को हि शक्तो रणे जेतुं पाण्डवं रभसं तदा | यस्य गोप्ता जगद्गोप्ता शङ्खचक्रगदाधरः || वासुदेवोऽनन्तशक्तिः सृष्टिसंहारकारकः | सर्वेश्वरो देवदेवः परमात्मा सनातनः ||', even then he promises to kill all the rest on the battle ground excepting *Shikhandi* 'निहनिष्ये नरव्याघ्र वर्जयित्वा शिखण्डिनम् || तैर्वाहं निहतः संख्ये गमिष्ये यमसादनम् | तान्वा निहत्य समरे प्रीतिं दास्याम्यहं तव ||.. नमहं स हनिष्यामि प्राणत्यागोऽपि भारत | यासौ प्राङ्निर्मिता धात्रा सैषा वै स्त्री शिखण्डिनी ||'. *Bhishma* realizes that *Duryodhana* desires to shift him from the battle ground he renews his battle with *Arjuna* 'मन्यमानः स तं राजन्प्रत्यादेशमिवात्मनः || निर्वेदं परमं गत्वा विनिन्द्य परवश्यताम्| दीर्घं दध्यौ शान्तनवो योद्धुकामोऽर्जुनं रणे ||'.

From then onwards the battle enters a decisive phase with mass slaughter on both sides, blood flowing like the river and river *Netravaati* ferrying everyone to the abode of *Death* 'तत्रासीत् सुमहद्युद्धं तव तेषां च संकुलम्| नराश्वरथनागानां यमराष्ट्रविवर्धनम्||.. अपोवाह रणे भीरून्कश्मलेनाभिसंवृतान्| यथा वैतरणी प्रेतान्प्रेतराजपुरं प्रति ||'. Aghast seeing such mass killings of many *Kshatriyas*, people complain about *Duryodhana's* selfish and greedy decision to hurt the noble minded *Pandavas* 'प्राकोशान्क्षत्रियास्तत्र दृष्ट्वा तद्वैशसं महत्| दुर्योधनापराधेन गच्छन्ति क्षत्रियाः क्षयम्|| गुणवत्सु कथं द्वेषं धृतराष्ट्रो जनेश्वरः | कृतवान् पाण्डुपुत्रेषु पापात्मा लोभमोहितः ||. *Sanjaya* too holds *Dhritarashtra* responsible for this tragedy since he had not listened to wise words of the elders which had ended in such grave times, when both *Kauravas* and *Pandavas* are fighting with each un-mindful of one's own life- 'यत्पुरा न निगृह्णासि वार्यमाणो महात्मभिः | वैचित्रवीर्य तस्येदं फलं पश्य सुदारुणम् || न हि पाण्डुसुता राजन्ससैन्याः सपदानुगाः | रक्षन्ति समरे प्राणान्कौरवा वापि संयुगे ||...'.

On ninth day of the war, *Arjuna's* son *Abhimanyu* shows exceptional chivalry. The battle continued even after the Sun was setting on the western horizon, *Bhishma* was creating havoc in *Pandava's* forces. In the great battle the divine intent seem to prompt father to kill the sons and sons their father, friends killing each other - 'ततो युद्धं महाघोरं प्रावर्तत सुदारुणम्| अपरां दिशमास्थाय प्रतमाने दिवाकरे ||... आविद्धरथनागाश्वं पतितध्वजसंकुलम्| अनीकं पाण्डुपुत्राणां हाहाभूतमचेतसाम्|| जघानात्र पिता पुत्रश्च पुत्रश्च पितरं तथा || प्रियं सखायं चाक्रन्दे सखा दैवबलात्कृतः |'. Seeing many of their heroes on *Pandava's* side are being exterminated, *Krishna* draws *Arjuna's* attention to his promise that he will kill them all and reminds that the appropriate time has come for killing *Bhishma*. Prove your resolve now to kill *Bhishma* along with his companions 'अयं स कालः सम्प्राप्तः पार्थ यः काङ्क्षितस्तव || प्रहरास्मिन्नरव्याघ्र न चेन्मोहाद्विमुह्यसे | यत्पुरा कथितं वीर राज्ञां तेषां समागमे ||... भीष्मद्रोणमुखान्सर्वान् धार्तराष्ट्रस्य सैनिकान्|| सानुबन्धान्हनिष्यामि ये मां योत्स्यन्ति संगरे | इति तत्कुरु कौन्तेय सत्यं वाक्यमरिंदम || क्षत्रधर्ममनुस्मृत्य युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः |'.

Arjuna, however, appeared to be still in dilemma asking *Krishna* that after killing his grandfather, what would be preferable: to rule living life as in nether worlds or to retire from the war to the forest for performing penance - 'अवध्यानां वधं कृत्वा गज्यं वा नग्कोंत्तग्म्| दुःग्वानि वनवासे वा किं नु मे मुकृतं भवेत्||'. Nevertheless to fight he requests *Krishna* to drive his chariot where *Bhishma* was stationed - 'चोदयाऽश्वानयतो भीष्मः कग्घ्यिं वचनं नव || पातयिष्यामि दुर्धर्षं भीष्मं कुरुपितामहम्|'. Seeing them directing their attention towards *Bhishma*, *Duryodhana* increases the shower of arrows and drowns *Arjuna's* chariot out of sight, even as. *Krishna* skillfully courses the chariot with dexterity to enable *Arjuna* to challenge *Bhishma*, who seemed to be impressed with *Arjuna's skill* praising him generously, even as he continued powerful arrows on him, 'नम्य ननपूजयामाम लाघवं शान्तनोः सुतः | गाङ्गेयम्तवब्रवीत्पार्थं धन्विश्रेष्ठमरिंदम | माधु माधु महाव्बाहो माधु कुन्तीमुतेति च || ममाभर्ष्यैवमपरं पगृह्य रुचिर धनुः | मुमोच समरे भीष्मः शरान्पार्थरथं पति |'. But *Krishna* observes that *Arjuna* was still not responding the challenge, becoming soft and respectful towards *Bhishma* who was shining on the battle field like the mid-noon Sun and creating havoc killing best of the warriors in *Pandava's* army 'वामुदेवम्नु सम्पेक्ष्य पार्थस्य मृदुयुद्धनाम्| भीष्मं च शग्वर्पाणि सृजन्तमनीशं युधि ||..वगन्वगनर्विनिघ्यन्नं पाण्डुपुत्रस्य सैनिकान्|| युगन्तमिव कुर्वाणं भीष्मं यौधिष्टिरे बले |.

Krishna not being able to control his anger any longer gets down again from his chariot and taking his whip in his hand, with his yellow dress flashing as if lightning is striking in between the dark clouds 'पीतकौशेयसंवीतो मणिश्यामो जनार्दनः | शुशुभे विद्रवन् भीष्मं विद्युन्माली यथाम्बुदः || स सिंह इव मातङ्ग यूथपर्भ इवर्षभम्| अभिदुद्राव वेगेन विनदन्यादवर्षभः ||' rushed towards *Bhishma* shouting angrily नामृपन महावाहुर्माधवः परवीरहा || उत्सृज्य रजतपरव्यान्हयान्पार्थस्य मारिष | वामुदेवम्नतो योगी पचस्कन्द महारथात्|| अभिदुद्राव भीष्मं स भुजपहरणो बली | प्रतोदपाणिस्तेजस्वी सिंहवद्विनदन्मुहुः || दारयन्निव पद्भ्या स जगती जगदीश्वरः | क्रोधताम्रेक्षणः कृष्णो जिघांसुरमितद्युतिः ||'.Seeing him thus approach *Bhishma* angrily there was one great commotion, soldiers shouting with fright, *Bhishma is killed, Bhishma is killed* - 'गमन्तमिव चेतांसि तावकानां महाहवे | दृट्वा माधवाकन्दे भीष्मायोद्यतमन्तिकं || हतो भीष्मो हतो भीष्मस्तत्र वचो महत्| अश्रूयत महाराज वासुदेवभयात्तदा ||'. Seeing him approach, *Bhishma* humbly and respectfully bowed down to him, saying that he would prefer to be killed by him, assuring him undoubted renown in three worlds - '..उवाच चैव गोविन्दमसम्भ्रान्तेन चेतसा | एह्येहि पुण्डरीकाक्ष देवदेव नमोऽस्तु ते || मामद्य सात्वतश्रेष्ठ पातयस्व महाहवे | त्वया हि देव संग्रामे हतस्यापि ममानघ || श्रेय एव परं कृष्ण लोके भवति सर्वतः | सम्भावितोऽस्मि गोविन्द त्रैलोक्येनाद्य संयुगे || प्रहरस्व यथेष्टं वै दासोऽस्मि ताव चानघ |'.

Krishna had time and again to instill courage and passion in *Arjuna* to perform his *Dharma*, seeing him being obscured by his powerful temporal affiliations. Eternal vigilance is the price which one has to pay when one devotes oneself to *Dharama*, needing keen and sharp awareness of one's performance of the ordained duties. In this endeavour *Krishna* is keen to keep the momentum in *Arjuna* ever alive seeing that it becomes slowed down with obscurity enveloping his decision and determination. Seeing *Krishna* rush towards *Bhishma* with intent to kill, *Arjuna's* conscience flares up again. He runs behind *Krishna* who was angry hissing like a serpent, appealing him with earnestness that he will fight *Bhishma* convincingly and without any hesitation and pleading him again to turn back and not break the promise given to *Duryodhana*, lest the ridicule him for his action - 'अन्वयेरं ततः पार्थः समभिद्रुत्य केशवम्|| निजग्राह महाबाहुर्बाहुभ्यां परिगृह्य वै |..पार्थस्तु विष्टभ्य बलवच्चरणौ परवीरहा || निजग्राह हृषीकेशं कथंचिद्दशमे पदे | तत एवमुवाचार्तः क्रोधपर्याकुलेक्षणम्|| निश्वसन्तं यथा नागमर्जुनः प्रणयात्सखा | निवर्तस्व महाबाहो नानृतं कर्तुमर्हसि || यत् त्वया कथितं पूर्वं न योत्स्यामीति केशव | मिथ्यावादीति लोकस्त्वां कथयिष्यन्ति माधव || ममैष भारः सर्वो हि हनिष्यामि पितामहम्| शपे केशव शस्त्रेण सत्यान सुकृतेन च ||'. Hearing these words spoken by *Arjuna Krishna* though inwardly pleased and pacified angrily climbed his chariot without uttering a word 'माधवस्तु वचः श्रुत्वा फाल्गुनस्य महात्मनः || अभवत्परमप्रीतो ज्ञात्वा पार्थस्य विक्रमम्, न किंचिदुक्त्वा सक्रोध आरुरोह रथ पुनः ||'.

Seeing *Bhishma's* continued aggressive posture, *Pandavas* become unnerved 'वध्यमान च भीष्मेण त्यक्तास्त्रं भयविह्वलम्|| निरुत्साहं वलं दृष्ट्वा पीडितं शरविक्षतम्| स्वसैन्यं च परावृत्त पलायणपरायणम्| भीष्म च युधि संरब्ध पीडयन्त महारथम्||...निशामुरत्र च सांपेक्ष्य घोररूपं भयानकम्| चिन्तयित्वा ततो राजा अवहारमरोचयत्||'. They gather together and reflect on the steps to be taken to counter him on the battle field. *Yudhishthira* voices his concern to *Krishna* saying 'कृष्ण पश्य महात्मान भीष्म भीमपराक्रमम्| गजं नलवनानीव विमृद्गन्त वलं मम || मम माधव सैन्येषु वध्यमानेषु तेन वै | कथ योत्स्याम दुर्धर्ष श्रेयो मेऽत्र विधीयताम्|| त्वमेव गतिरस्माकं नान्या गतिमुपास्महे | न युद्धं रोचते मह्यं भीष्मेण सह माधव | हन्ति भीष्मो महावीरो मम सैन्य च संयुगे ||' saying that fighting *Bhishma* does not appeal his mind and would rather prefer departing to the forests 'वन यास्यामि दुर्धर्षं श्रेयो वै तत्र मे गतम्| न युद्ध रोचते कृष्ण

न्ति भीष्मो हि नः सदा ||'. Therefore, he laments that he had to fight with one whom they are reluctant to strike for a mere piece of land and temporal pleasures. At the same time *Yudhishthira's* sensitive mind revolts at the numerous sufferings which they had to suffer and justifying the claim to the share which they were entitled 'मत्कृते भ्रातृसौहार्दाद्राज्यभ्रष्टा वनं गताः | परिक्लिष्टा तथा कृष्णा मत्कृते मधुसूदन || जीवितं बहु मन्येऽहं जीवितं ह्यद्य दुर्लभम्| जीवितस्याद्य शेषेण चरिष्ये धर्ममुत्तमम्|| यदि तेऽहमनुग्राह्यो भ्रातृभिः सह केशव | स्वधर्मस्याविरोधेन हितं व्याहर केशव ||'.

Krishna observing that his despondency was not so much about confronting a powerful adversary as it is about confronting noble and respectable elder and grandsire like *Bhishma*, who had brought them up affectionately, he advises *Yudhishthira* not to get disheartened so easily but fight as brave warriors. He assures him that if permitted by him he himself would kill *Bhishma* if *Arjuna* does not desire to. If they feel victory is possible only with *Bhishma's* death then he will kill him sitting in the chariot itself. They will see then *Bhishma* being brought down from his chariot. Every friend of the *Pandavas* is *Krishna's* friend and every enemy of their is indeed his enemy. He challenges *Yudhishthira* to make him his soldier and he will sow how easily he will kill *Bhishma*. *Arjuna* is his friend, relative and disciple as well, therefore, he will give even his flesh for *Arjuna's* sake, even as he is sure that *Arjuna* will give up his life for him. They have both agreed that one will come to help the other. Therefore that which *Arjuna* has vowed to fulfill will verily be fulfilled as his task. And if *Arjuna* himself sets his mind to fight, there is nothing that is impossible for him - 'धर्मपुत्र विषादं त्वं मा कृथाः सत्यसङ्गर | यस्य ते भ्रातरः शूरा दुर्जयाः शत्रुसूदनाः ||.. मां वा नियुङ्क्ष्व सौहार्दाद्योत्स्ये भीष्मेण पाण्डव | त्वत्प्रयुक्तो महाराज किं न कुर्यां महाहवे || हनिष्यामि रणे भीष्ममाहूय पुरुषर्षभ | पश्यतां धार्तराष्ट्राणां यदि नेच्छति फाल्गुनः || यदि भीष्मे हते वीरे जयं पश्यसि पाण्डव | हन्तास्म्येकरथेनाद्य कुरुवृद्धं पितामहम्|| पश्य मे विक्रमं राजन्महेन्द्रस्येव संयुगे | विमुञ्चन्तं महास्त्राणि पातयिष्यामि तं रथात्|| यः शत्रुः पाण्डुपुत्राणां मच्छत्रुः स न संशयः | मदर्था भवदीया ये ये मदीयास्तवैव ते || तव भ्राता मम सखा सम्बन्धी शिष्य एव च | मांसान्युत्कृत्य दास्यामि फाल्गुनार्थे महीपते || एष चापि नरव्याघ्रो मत्कृते जीवितं त्यजेत्| एष नः समयस्तात तारयेम परस्परम्|| स मां नियुङ्क्ष्व राजेन्द्र यथा योद्धा भवाम्यहम्|..अनुज्ञातं तु पार्थेन मया कार्यं न संशयः | अथवा फाल्गुनस्यैष भारः परिमितो रणे ||'.

Yudhishthira is pleased with *Krishna's* capacity to defeat the *Kauravas* and his assurance, at the same time would not like him to be false to his promise. He is aware that *Krishna* has always been helping them even without taking part in the war. *Bhishma* has promised him that even though he will fight on *Duryodhana's* behalf; his advice would continue to be given to him. Therefore it would approach *Bhishma* to resolve the manner of his death rather than ask *Krishna* to resolve the problem for him. It is one of the great travesties of *Kshatra Dharma* that one is obliged to kill even those whom one respects. Therefore, he tells *Krishna* 'एवमेतन्महाबाहो यथा वदसि माधव | सर्वे ह्येते न पर्याप्तास्तव वेगविधारणे ||...न तु त्वामनृतं कर्तुमुत्सहे स्वात्मगौरवात्| अयुध्यमानः साहाय्यं यथोक्तं कुरु माधव || समयस्तु कृतः कश्चिन्मम भीष्मेण संयुगे | मन्त्रयिष्ये तवार्थाय न तु योत्स्ये कथञ्चन || दुर्योधनार्थे योत्स्यामि सत्यमेतदिति प्रभो |.. भवता सहिताः सर्वे प्रयाम मधुसूदन || तद्वयं सहिता गत्वा भीष्मापु नरोत्तमम्| नचिरात्सर्वे वार्ष्णेय मन्त्रं पृच्छाम कौरवम्||..बालाः पिता विहीनश्च तेन संवर्धिता वयम्|| तं चेत्पितामहं वृद्धं हन्तुमिच्छामि माधव | पितुः पितरमिष्टं च धिगस्तु क्षत्रजीविकाम्||'.

Then along with his brothers and *Krishna Yudhishthira* goes to *Bhishma* and offers him their respect. *Bhishma* is pleased to see them as well as *Krishna* and when he speaks about their inability to defeat him, he is overwhelmed by compassion. He acknowledges that no one can defeat him so long as he holds weapons in his arms but becomes vulnerable only when he lays them down, seeing inauspicious sign in any person or in a chariot. He informs that they have *Shikhandi* with them, who was once a woman. Therefore, let placing him before him, let *Arjuna* kill him when he constrained to lay down his weapons 'न कथञ्चन कौन्तेय मयि जीवति संयुगे | जयो भवति सर्वज्ञ सत्यमेतद्ब्रवीमि ते ||.. नाहं जेतुं रणे शक्यः सेन्द्रैरपि सुरासुरैः | आत्तशस्त्रो रणे यत्तो गृहीतवरकार्मुकः || ततो मां न्यस्तशस्त्रं तु एते हन्युर्महारथाः | ..य एष द्रौपदो राजंस्तव सैन्ये महारथः || शिखण्डी समरमर्षी शूरश्च समितिञ्जयः | यथाभवच्च स्त्री पूर्वं पश्चात्पुंस्त्वं समागतः || अर्जुनः समरे शूरः पुरस्कृत्य शिखण्डिनम्|| मामेव विशिखैस्तीक्ष्णैरभिद्रवतु दंशितः | अमङ्गलध्वजे तस्मिन् स्त्रीपूर्वे च विशेषतः || न प्रहर्तुमभीप्सामि गृहीतेषुः कथञ्चन | तदनन्तरं समासाद्य पाण्डवो मां धनंजयः || शरैर्घातयतु क्षिप्रं समन्तादभरतर्षभ | न तं पश्यामि लोकेषु मां हन्याद्यः समुद्यतम्|| ऋते कृष्णान्महाभागात्पाण्डवाद्वा धनञ्जयात्| एष तस्मात्पुरोधाय कञ्चिदन्यं ममग्रतः ||'.

Arjuna is too much of a thinking man therefore, he continues to be in dilemma rarely trying to rise above the dualities in life. Should he follow his instincts and respect *Bhishma* as venerable grandfather or take up arms and kill him as an adversary? When one is confused one seeks suggestions

not solutions, desires confirmation what one believes rather than determination of one's doubts. *Arjuna*, therefore, asks *Krishna* again how can he fight *Bhishma*, his venerable कुरु पितामह, who had tended him in childhood, often lifting him from dust of the earth, even allowing him to climb his lap. Let him be killed but he will not kill *Bhisma*. Or else he will do whatever *Krishna* desires, because how can he having known the perennial righteousness, kill one who is old and has laid down his arms - 'गुरूणा कुरुवृद्धेन कृतप्रज्ञेन धीमता | पितामहेन संग्रामे कथं योत्स्यामि माधव || क्रीडता हि मया बाल्ये वासुदेव महामनाः | पांसुरूषितगात्रेण महात्मा परुषीकृतः || यस्याहमधिरुह्याङ्कं बालः किल गदाग्रज | तातेत्यवोचं पितरं पितुः पाण्डोर्महात्मनः ||..कामं वध्यतु सैन्यं मे नाहं योत्स्ये महात्मनाः | जयो वास्तु वधो वा मे कथं कृष्ण मन्यसे || कथमस्मद्विधः कृष्ण जानन्धर्मं सनातनम्| न्यस्तशस्त्रे च वृद्धे च प्रहरेद्धि पितामहे ||'.

Krishna is the divine consciousness which abides within each being and the voice of that *Consciousness* is heard faintly. Nonetheless it echoes unerringly from time to time reminding one of one's ordained duty. Therefore, *Krishna* replies to him that his duty is firmly established in his being a *Kshatriya* and as *kshatriya* he has also vowed that he will kill *Bhishma*, *Drona* and others. How can he step back from that resolve. Only with his fall, *Arjuna's* success is assured not in any other manner. These facts having been established by divine will in ancient time, no change can be foreseen in this manner. *Kshatriya's* धर्म is to protect fighting if necessary without cavil. 'प्रतिज्ञाय वधं जिष्णो पुरा भीष्मस्य संयुगे | क्षत्रधर्मे स्थितः पार्थ कथं नैनं हनिष्यसि || पातयैनं रथात्पार्थ क्षत्रियं युद्धदुर्मदम्| नाहत्वा युधि गाङ्गेयं विजयस्ते भविष्यति || दृष्टमेतत् पुरा देवैर्गमिष्यति यमक्षयम्| यद्दृष्टं हि पुरा पार्थ तत्तथा न तदन्यथा ||...शाश्वतोऽयं स्थितो धर्मः क्षत्रियाणां धनंजय | योद्धव्यं रक्षितव्यं च यष्टव्यं चानसूयुभिः ||'.

Seeing that *Bhishma* has already decided his further course to depart to the other worlds and his death is fated the moment he sees *Shikhandi* before him, *Arjuna* comes to the conclusion to kill *Bhishma* placing *Shikhandi* in front of him. While he will keep all others at distance, he will allow *Shikhandi* to shower his arrows on *Bhishma*. Then *Pandavas* along with *Krishna* became satisfied and went to sleep that night.

Arjuna's decision was as ordained by divine intent as *Bhishma's* death was, in furtherance the *divine intent* and *purpose* already decided and confirmed - मयैवैते निहताः पूर्वमेव, every action or thing in creation, whether human or non-human, animate or inanimate performed, not necessarily by the divinity himself directly deciding, operating and culmination of performance of actions but through others being the mediums or instruments - निमित्तमात्र as though mounted on a machine, भ्रामयन्यन्त्रारूढानि मायया, though in accordance with their गुण and स्वभाव.

Therefore, in the present instance, *the divine intent and purpose* having been already decided by *Krishna*, as the representative model of divine essence, *Arjuna* as well as *Shikhandi* became but the निमित्तthe instrument in execution. *Bhishma* was himself a great human being and sees both *Krishna* and *Arjuna* as none other than the instruments of his own redemption - 'न त पश्यामि लोकेषु मां हन्याद्यः समुद्यतम्| ऋते कृष्णान्महाभागात्पाण्डवाद्वा धनञ्जयात्||'. *Krishna* therefore says, the gods had already seen earlier that *Bhishma* will die in this manner, 'शिखण्डी निधनं कृष्ण भीष्मस्य भविता ध्रुवम्| दृष्ट्वैव हि सदा भीष्मः पाञ्चाल्यं विनिवर्तते ||'.

On the tenth day when the armies face each other *Pandavas* engage *Bhishma* in a fierce battle, *Arjuna* keeping *Shikhandi* always in front 'अर्जुनप्रमुखाः पार्थाः पुरस्कृत्य शिखण्डिनम्| भीष्मं युद्धेऽभ्यवर्तन्त किरन्तो विविधाञ्शरान्||'. *Bhishma* with supreme detachment continued to shower arrows on *Pandavas* 'स पाण्डवान्महेष्वासः पञ्चालांश्चैव सृंजयान्| नराश्चवरथदन्तीश्च शितैरञ्जलिकैस्तथा || अभ्यवर्षत दुर्धर्षस्त्यक्त्वा जीवितमात्मनः |'. His bravery was equally matched by *Arjuna*, the battle becoming more and more ferocious. *Bhishma* coming over *Shikhandi's* army scorched it like the mighty Time with its open mouth. *Shikhandi* himself no mean warrior responds with sharp arrows on *Bhishma's* chest seeing which *Bhishma* with much reluctance derisively chided him saying that *Shikhandi* may or may not fight but he himself will certainly not fight with him, saying that the form in which the creator created him was he that is known as *Shikhandi* 'स शिखण्डी त्रिभिर्बाणैरभ्यविध्यत्स्तनान्तरे | आशीविषमिव क्रुद्धं कालसृष्टमिवान्तकम्|| स तेनातिभृशं विद्धः प्रेक्ष्य भीष्मः शिखण्डिनम्| अनिच्छन्निव संक्रुद्धः प्रहसन्निदमब्रवीत्|| काममभ्यस वा मा वा न त्वा योत्स्ये कथंचन | यैव हि त्वं कृता धात्रा सैव हि त्वं शिखण्डिनी ||'. Hearing these disparaging words, *Shikhandi* lost control over his mind retorting angrily that whether liked or not, he will surely kill him, therefore do as he wishes

hishma, 'जानामि त्वां महाबाहो क्षत्रियाणां भयंकर | मया श्रुतं च ते युद्धं जामदग्न्येन वै सह || ध्रुवं च त्वां हनिष्यामि शपे सत्येन तेऽनघ | एतच्छ्रुत्वा च मद्वाक्यं न्कृतय तत्समाचर ||..काममभ्यस वा मा वा न मे जीवन्प्रमोक्ष्यसे | सुदृष्टः क्रियतां भीष्म लोकोऽयं समितिंजय ||'. The verbal repartee makes *hishma* loosen involuntarily his grip on his bow, seeing which *Arjuna* encourages him to increase his nslaught further assuring his support. *Bhishma* is unable to counter your threat, therefore intensify you ttack further. If he withdraws without killing *Bhishma* both he and *Arjuna* will be subjected to ridicule - अह त्वानुयास्यामि परान् विद्रावयञ्शरैः | अभिद्रव सुसंरब्धो भीष्मं भीमपराक्रमम्|| न हि ते संयुगे पीडां शक्तः कर्तुं महाबलः | तस्मादद्य महाबाहो त्नाद्भीष्ममभिद्रव || अहत्वा समरे वीरं यदि यास्यसि मारिष | अवहास्योऽस्य लोकस्य भविष्यसि मया सह || नावहास्या यथ्द्रावीर भवेम परमाहवे | तथाकुरु रणे ाधायस्व पितामहम्|| अहं ते रक्षणं युद्धे करिष्यामि महाबल | वारयन्रथिनः सर्वान्साधयस्व पितामहम्||'.

In the meanwhile, *Bhishma* continued to kill thousands of soldiers to redeem the debt which e owed to *Kauravas*, 'यथाप्रतिज्ञं कौरव्यं स चापि समितिञ्जयः | पार्थानामकरोद् भीष्मः सततं समितिक्षयम्||', which onslaught *Pandavas* could not control, the grand old sire appearing every moment like *Yama* flashing the noose in and, 'नहि भीष्म महेष्वासं पाण्डवाः पाण्डुपूर्वज | अशक्नुवन्रणे जेतुं पाशहस्तमिवान्तकम्||'. But *Bhishma* knew well that this display will not last long, therefore, when *Duryodhana* tells him that as promised he has killed thousand of soldiers. He is also assured that either some extraordinary feat would be performed or he will be killed by *Pandavas*. If he dies then his debts will stand redeemed 'पूर्वकालं तव मया प्रतिज्ञातं महाबल | हत्वा दशसहस्राणि क्षत्रियाणां महात्मनाम्|| संग्रामद्व्यपयातव्यमेतत्कर्म ममाह्निकाम्| इति तत् कृतवांश्चाहं यथोक्तं भरतर्षभ ||..अद्य ते पुरुषव्याघ्र प्रतिमोक्ष्ये ऋणं तव | भर्तृपिण्डकृतं राजन्निहतः पृतनामुखे ||'..

Seeing this one-sided war between *Bhishma* and *Arjuna* with *Shikhandi* standing by, *Drona* observed the events not shaping well for *Kauravas*. Inauspicious signs were seen on all sides, with animals and birds making screeching sounds, Sun loosing its splendour and quarters turning red in colour, a powerful meteor hurled form centre of Sun's orb, imagoes of the gods in the temples shaking, laughing, dancing and weeping in their seats, their Sun and the planets revolving anti-clockwise and moon hanging upside down with corners turned reverse - 'दिक्ष्वशान्तानि घोराणि व्याहरन्ति मृगद्विजाः | नीचैर्गृधा निलीयन्ते भारतानां चमूं प्रति || नष्टप्रभ इवादित्यः सर्वतो लोहिता दिशः |...पपात महती चोल्का मध्येनादित्यमण्डलात्|..देवतायतनस्थाश्च कौरवेन्द्रस्य देवताः | कम्पन्ते च हसन्ते च नृत्यन्ति च रुदन्ति च || अपसव्यं ग्रहाश्चक्रुरलक्ष्माणं दिवाकरम्| अवाक्शिराश्च भगवानुपातिष्ठत चन्द्रमाः ||'. He confided in *Ashvatthama* that *Yudhishthira's* anger, confrontation between *Bhishma* and *Arjuna*, the use powerful weapons all point out that a great calamity is about to fall on people. Therefore, persons who are dependent on others, for them this is the time to prove their worth. He sees only in *Yudhishthira* with his brothers some traces of kindness, compassion and charitable with *Krishna* on their side while on the other hand, evil minded *Duryodhana* appears burning with anger which will eventually destroy his army. Who will not desire that his sons should live long, even then following क्षत्रधर्म he prevails upon his son, *Ashvatthama* to go and help *Bhishma* 'युधिष्ठिरस्य च क्रोधो भीष्मार्जुनसङ्गतः | मम चास्त्रसमारम्भः प्रजानामशिवं ध्रुवम्||..नायं संरक्षितुं कालः प्राणान्पुत्रोपजीविभिः | याहि स्वर्गं पुरस्कृत्य यशसे विजयाय च ||..ब्रह्मण्यता दमो दानं तपश्च चरितं महत्| इहैव दृश्यते पार्थे भ्राता यस्य धनंजयः || भीमसेनश्च बलवान्माद्रीपुत्रौ च पाण्डवौ | वासुदेवश्च वार्ष्णेयो यस्य नाथो व्यवस्थितः || तस्यैष मन्युप्रभवो धार्तराष्ट्रस्य दुर्मतेः | तपोदग्धशरीरस्य कोपो दहति भारतीम्|| एष संदृश्यते पार्थो वासुदेवव्यपाश्रयः | दारयन्सर्वसैन्यानि धार्तराष्ट्राणि सर्वशः ||,, को हि नेच्छन्प्रियं पुत्रं जीवन्तं शाश्वतीः समाः | क्षत्रधर्मं तु सम्प्रेक्ष्य ततस्त्वां नियुनज्म्यहम्||'.

The battle continued with fierce attack on *Bhishma* by *Pandavas* placing *Shikhandi* in the forefront, 'तथैव पाण्डवाः शूरा धृष्टद्युम्नश्च पार्षतः | अभ्यद्रवन्रणे भीष्मं व्यादितास्यमिवान्तकम्||...युधिष्ठिरप्रमुखाः पार्थाः पुरस्कृत्य शिखण्डिनम्| अयोधयन्रणे भीष्मं सहिताः सर्वसृञ्जयैः ||'. Seeing the battle continue endlessly, *Bhishma* became disgusted wishing his lifer to end 'दशाहानि ततस्तप्त्वा भीष्मः पाण्डववाहिनीम्| निरविद्यत धर्मात्मा जीवितेन परंतप || स क्षिप्रं वधमन्विच्छन्नात्मनोऽभिमुखो रणे |'. He tells *Yudhishthira* that he is tired of his body having killed many soldiers, therefore, if he desires some good thing to happen for him, then he should see that he is killed by *Panchalas* or *Srinjayas* at the earliest 'निर्विण्णोऽस्मि भृशं तात देहेनानेन भारत | घ्नतश्च मे गतः कालः सुबहून्प्राणिनो रणे || तस्मात्पार्थं पुरोधाय पञ्चालान्सृंजयांस्तथा | मद्वधे क्रियतां यत्नो मम चेदिच्छसि प्रियम्||'. At that time there was no one other than *Arjuna* and *Shikhandi* who could challenge *Bhishma* 'न कश्चिदेनं समरे प्रत्युद्याति महारथाः || ऋते पाण्डुसुतं वीरं श्वेताश्वं कृष्णसारथीम्| शिखण्डिनं च समरे पाञ्चाल्यममितौजसम्||'.

Then a great tumult arose when *Bhishma* was attacked by *Shikhandi* shooting deadly arrows on him, seeing which the old warrior became angry looking at him angrily as if he would be burn. But

knowing him to be one born female turned to male, he did not return his charge. But *Shikhandi* was not aware of this but became bold to charge further when *Arjuna* encouraged him to kill *Bhishma*. Even then *Bhishma* did not return *Shakhandi's* charge, but continued to showers arrows on *Arjuna* 'शिखण्डी तु रणे भीष्ममासाद्य पुरुषर्षभम्। दशभिर्निशितैर्भल्लैराजघान स्तनान्तरे ॥ शिखण्डिनं तु गाङ्गेयः क्रोधदीप्तेन चक्षुषा । सम्प्रेक्षत कटाक्षेण निर्दहन्निव भारत ॥ स्त्रीत्वं तस्य स्मरन्राजन्सर्वलोकस्य पश्यतः । नाजघान रणे भीष्मः स च तन्नावबुद्धवान्॥'. Even as *Bhishma* was discharging his powerful arrows on *Arjuna*, *Shikhandi* intervenes challenging him, but seeing him *Bhishma* withdraws his fearsome arms. Seeing the opportunity of his grandfather withdrawing his arms, *Arjuna* pins him down with shower of innumerable arrows making him unconscious 'तं शिखण्डी रणे यान्तमभ्यद्रवत दंशितः । ततः समहरद्भीष्मस्तदस्त्रं पावकोपमम्॥ त्वरितः पाण्डवो राजन्मध्यमः श्वेतवाहनः । निजघ्ने तावकं सैन्यं मोहयित्वा पितामहम्॥'.

At that moment *Krishna* declares to *Arjuna* that if he hits *Bhishma*, standing in the midst of the great battle shining like the mid-day Sun, 'मध्यं प्राप्तं यथा ग्रीष्मे तपन्तं भास्करं दिवि ।' with a powerful arrow, then he would surely be successful in killing him, since there is no other than he that can kill *Bhishma* 'एष शान्तनवो भीष्मः सेनयोरन्तरे स्थितः । संनिहत्य बलादेनं विजयस्ते भविष्यति ॥...न हि भीष्मशरानन्यः सोढुमुत्सहते विभुः ॥'. Thus encourages by *Krishna*, *Arjuna* issues a shower of arrows concealing his chariot and the horses. Soon placing *Shikandi* in the forefront they increase their charge, destroying in the process the chariot and even the mighty bow which *Bhishma* was holding till then. Seeing that his power was diminishing, *Bhishma* reflected that if it were not for the protection of *Krishna* and his own resolve not to harm them he would have surely killed *Pandavas* by this time. But even though he was invincible in the three worlds, he decided to withdraw, firstly because they are *Pandu's* sons and secondly they have placed *Shikhandi* in front of them. In earlier times, his father had given him the choice to die at his *will*, which option he should now consider, the time having now arrived 'छिन्नां तां शक्तिमालक्ष्य भीष्मः क्रोधसमन्वितः ॥ अचिन्तयद्रणे वीरो बुद्ध्या परपुरंजयः । शक्तोऽहं धनुषैकेन निहन्तुं सर्वपाण्डवान्॥ यद्येषां न भवेद्गोप्ता विष्वक्सेनो महाबलः । कारणद्वयमास्थाय नाहं योत्स्यामि पाण्डवान्॥ अवध्यत्वाच्च पाण्डूनां स्त्रीभावाच्च शिखंडिनः । पित्रा तुष्टेन मे पूर्वं यदा कालीमुदावहम्॥ स्वच्छन्दमरणं दत्तमवध्यत्वं रणे तथा । तस्मान्मृत्युमहं मन्ये प्राप्तकालमिवात्मनः ॥ एवं ज्ञात्वा व्यवसितं भीष्मस्यामिततेजसः । ऋषयो वसवश्चैव वियत्स्था भीष्ममब्रुवन्। यत्ते व्यवसितं तात तदस्माकमपि प्रियम्। तत् कुरुष्व महाराज युद्धे बुद्धिं निवर्तय ॥..सम्भ्रमश्च महानासीत्त्रिदशानां विशाम्पते । पतिष्यन्ति रथाद्भीष्मे सर्वलोकप्रिये तदा ॥'.

This was a great moment in *Bhsihna's* life, as one of the eight sons of *Vasus*, born human. Now that the time has come for him to leave the world hearing which seers and *Vasus* in space express their satisfaction and commend his decision 'एवं ज्ञात्वा व्यवसितं भीष्मस्यामिततेजसः । ऋषयो वसवश्चैव वियत्स्था भीष्ममब्रुवन्। यत्ते व्यवसितं तात तदस्माकमपि प्रियम्। तत्कुरुष्व महाराज युद्धे बुद्धिं निवर्तय ॥' and as if to welcome him back in space, rains poured, followed by pleasant breeze and heavenly sounds heard 'अस्य वाक्यस्य निधने प्रादुरासीच्छिवोऽनिलः । अनुलोमः सुगन्धी च पृषतैश्च समन्वितः ॥ देवदुन्दुभयश्चैव सम्प्रणेदुर्महास्वनाः । पपात पुष्पवृष्टिश्च भीष्मस्योपरि मारिष ॥'.

Then knowing that the time has come for the final assault, *Arjuna* keeps *Shikhandi* in his forefront and showers sharp and sure arrows on *Bhishma* and every time he picked up a new bow, breaking the same and completely disarming him. The venerable grand-father then stopped raising any further arms on *Arjuna* - 'ततः किरीटी संक्रुद्धो भीष्ममेवाभ्यवर्तत ॥ शिखण्डिनं पुरस्कृत्य धनुः चास्य समाच्छिनत्।..निमेषार्धेन कौन्तेय आत्तमात्तं महारणे ॥ एवमस्य धनूंष्याजौ चिच्छेद सुबहून्यथ । ततः शान्तनवो भीष्मो बीभत्सुं नात्यवर्तत ॥'. Seeing himself being disarmed, *Bhishma* remarked to *Dushasana* standing nearby that *Arjuna* having become extremely furious and showering his arrows is not possible to be defeated even by *Indra*, gods, *danavas* or *rakshasaas*, then how can human being like him hope to kill him 'एष पार्थो रणे क्रुद्धः पाण्डवानां महारथः । शरैरनेकसाहस्रैर्मामेवाभ्यहनद् रणे ॥ न ह्येष समरे शक्यो जेतुं वज्रभृता अपि । न चापि सहिता वीरा देवदानवराक्षसाः ॥ मां चापि शक्ता निर्जेतुं किमु मर्त्या महारथाः ।'.

Even as *Bhishma* was thus speaking to *Dushasana*, Arjuna shot sharp arrows pierce him completely, observing the intense pain which they were giving, he exclaimed that these arrows could not have been from *Shikhandi* but could have been shot by *Arjuna* alone 'ततो दुःशासनं भूयः स्मयमान इवाब्रवीत्। अतिविद्धः शितैर्बाणैर्भृशं गाण्डीवधन्वना । वज्राशनिसमस्पर्शा अर्जुनेन शरा युधि ॥ मुक्ताः सर्वेऽव्यवच्छिन्ना नेमे बाणाः शिखण्डिनः । निकृन्तमाना मर्माणि दृढावरणभेदिनः ॥ मुसला इव मे घ्नन्ति नेमे बाणाः शिखण्डिनः ॥ वज्रदण्डसमस्पर्शा वज्रवेगदुरासदाः । मम प्राणानारुजन्ति नेमे बाणाः शिखण्डिनः । समाविशन्ति मर्माणि नेमे बाणाः शिखण्डिनः ॥ अर्जुनस्य इमे बाणा नेमे बाणाः शिखण्डिनः ॥ कृन्तन्ति मम गात्राणि माघमासे गवा इव । सर्वे ह्यपि न मे दुःखं कुर्युरन्ये नराधिपाः ॥ वीरं

ण्डीवधन्वानमृते जिष्णुं कपिध्वजम्|'.

Then, *Bhishma,* indomitable warrior that he is, climbs down from his chariot with a sword in nd to win or die but *Arjuna* strikes him again shattering his armour to pieces. *Yudhishthira* calls his ldiers to fight *Bhishma*, saying no one need be afraid of him. On the tenth day *Bhishma's* body appears ke a pin-cushion or a sieve with all arrows in his body leaving not an inch left. People lamented *alas*, *as* with their hearts sinking in sorrow even as *Bhishma* was seen sinking from the chariot, with his ead rested facing the east 'निहत्य समरे राजञ्शतशोऽथ सहस्रशः | न तस्यासीदनिर्भिन्नं गात्रे द्व्यंगुलमन्तरम्|| एवंभूतस्तव पिता शरैर्विशकलीकृतः | नागः फाल्गुनेनाजौ पार्काशगः पापतद्रथात्|| किंचिच्छेषे दिनकरे पुत्राणां तव पश्यताम्|| हाहेति दिवि देवानां पार्थिवानां च भारत || पतमाने रथाद्भीष्मे बभूव हात्मनः | सम्पतन्तमभिप्रेक्ष्य महात्मानं पितामहम्|| सह भीष्मेण सर्वेषां प्रापतन्हृदयानि नः |'.

When *Bhishma* fell down from his chariot every one felt as of their hearts to fell down, with numerable arrows still stuck to his body. The arrows were so many and so close that when he fell down is body did not touch the ground 'सम्पतन्तमभिप्रेक्ष्य महात्मानं पितामहम्|| सह भीष्मेण सर्वेषां प्रापतन्हृदयानि नः | स पपात महाबाहुर्व धामनुनादयन्|| इन्द्रध्वज इवोत्सृष्टः केतुः सर्वधनुष्मताम्| धरणीं न स पस्पर्श शरसंघैःसमावृतः ||'. As he fell a divine energy seems to enter is body, even as rains lashed from the sky and earth trembled, Sun standing motionless in the southern emisphere. *Bhishma* regaining his consciousness even as ethereal voice would heard from the space, ondering how this great soul decided to die when the Sun was still in the southern hemisphere 'शरतल्पे हेष्वासं शयानं पुरुषर्षभम्| रथात्प्रपतितं चैनं दिव्यो भावः समाविशत्|| अभ्यवर्षच्च पर्जन्यः प्राकम्पत च मेदिनी | पतन्स ददृशे चापि दक्षिणेन दिवाकरम्|| संज्ञां पालभद्वीरः कालं संचिन्त्य भारत | अन्तरिक्षे च शुश्राव दिव्या वाचः समन्तत || कथं महात्मा गाङ्गेयः सर्वशास्त्रभृतां वरः | कालकर्ता नरव्याघ्रः सम्प्राप्ते क्षिणायने ||. *Bhishma* spoke to them that he will hold his breath and will depart to his original place only hen Sun moves over to the northern hemisphere and requests them to pray so that he may hold on to his fe till that time 'स्थितोऽस्मीति च गाङ्गेयस्तच्छ्रुत्वा वाक्यमब्रवीत्| धारयामास च प्राणान्पतितोऽपि महीतले || उत्तरायणमन्विच्छान्भीष्मः कुरुपितामहः | स्य तन्मतमाज्ञाय हाङ्ग हिमवतः सुरङ्ना || महर्षीन्हंसरूपेण प्रेषयामास तत्र वै |'.

Hearing this stand taken by her son, *Ganga* sends seers to him in the form of swans to inquire स्य तन्मतमाज्ञाय गङ्गा हिमवतः सुता || महर्षीन्हंसरूपेण प्रेषयामास तत्र वै | ततः सम्पातिनो हंसास्त्वरिता मानसौकसः || आजग्मुः सहिता द्रष्टुं भीष्मं रुपितामहम्| यत्र शेते नरश्रेष्ठः शरतल्पे पितामहः ||. After offering him their obeisance, they wonder how come he is eparting when the Sun is still in southern horizon. To them he replies that he will not depart when the un is in southern solstice and will go to his abode only when the Sun crosses to the northern solstice भीष्मः स्थं महात्मा सन्संस्थाना दशिणायने | ...तानब्रवीच्छान्तनवो नाहं गन्ता कथंचन | दक्षिणावर्त आदित्ये एतन्मे मनसि स्थितम्|| गमिष्यामि स्वकं स्थानमासीद्यन्मे रातनम्| उदगायान आदित्यां हंसाः सत्यं ब्रवीमि वः || धारयिष्यामहं प्राणनुत्तरायणकाङ्क्षया | ऐश्वर्यभूतः प्राणानुमुत्सर्गो यतो मम ||'.

Seeing *Bhishma* fall *Kauarvas* were completely confused and shattered. Great despondency ook over them with *Duryodhana*, *Kripa* and others wailing the loss. People said that even though *Bhishma* was unconquerable, is lying dead thinking the time for destruction of *Kauravas* has arrived अवध्ये शन्तनोः पुत्रे हते भीष्मे महौजसि | अभावः सहसा राजन् कुरुराजस्य तर्कितः ||'. *Pandavas* were seen celebrating the success lowing their conches. Some blamed *Kshatriya Dharma* for the fall of such great warrior, for no reason xcept that the end of *Kauravas* is soon to come. Even as his ancestors praised his brave deeds *Bhishma* was seen enjoined in *Yoga*, with *upanishadic* wisdom as the bed to rest on while he waits for the Sun to raverse to the northern hemisphere 'क्षत्रं चान्येऽभ्यनिन्दन्त भीष्मं चान्येऽभ्यपूजयन्| ऋषयः पितरश्चैव प्रशंसुर्महाव्रतम्|| भरतानां च ये पूर्वे ते नं प्रशशंसिरे | महोपनिषदं चैव योगमास्थाय वीर्यवान्| जपञ्शान्तनवो धीमान्कालकाङ्क्षी स्थितोऽभवत्||'.

When *Dhritarashtra* heard the news he was surprised but seemed to be more concerned telling *Sanjaya* that his regret is that he is still alive even after hearing *Bhishma's* fall, lamenting that his heart has seemed to have become steel that it is not shattered. He is feeling again and again becoming despondent seeing him die in the hands of *Duapada's* son *Shikhandi*, whom even *Parashurama* could not kill in earlier times, says, 'नदैव निहतान् मन्ये कुरूनन्यांश्च पाण्डवैः | न पाहरद्भीष्मो घृणित्वाद्द्रुपदात्मजः || ततो दुःखतरं मन्ये किमन्यत्प्रभविष्यति | अद्याहं पितरं श्रुत्वा निहतं स्म सुदुर्मतिः || अश्मसारमयं नूनं हृदयं मम संजय | श्रुत्वा विनिहतं भीष्मं शतधा यन्न दीर्यते ||... पुनःपुनःमृष्यामि हतं देवव्रतं रणे न हाते जामदग्न्येन दिव्यैरस्त्रैर्यं पुरा || स हतो द्रौपदेयेन पाञ्चाल्येन शिखण्डिना |'.

When *Drona* hears the news, he is shocked and stopped the fight; *Kripa* and *Duryodhana* were

seen lamenting copiously without any strength to engage *Pandavas* further in battle. Seeing Kauravas stopping the battle, *Pandavas* too told their own soldiers to cease fighting further. Then they disarmed themselves and came over to the place where *Bhishma* lay waiting for the death to come. Thereafter along with the *Kauravas* they stood surrounding *Bhishma* with their heads bowed respectfully.

Seeing both *Pandavas* and *Kauravas* gathered around him, *Bhishma* welcomed with pleasure *Welcome I am happy having seen you.* 'अथ पाण्डून् कुरूंश्चैव प्रणिपत्यागतः स्थितान्। अभ्यभाषत धर्मात्मा भीष्मः शान्तनवस्तदा ।। स्वागतं वो महाभागाः स्वागतं वो महारथाः । तुष्यामि दर्शनाच्चाहं युष्माकममरोपमाः ||'. *Bhishma* then informed that his head is hanging while his body is resting on the bed of arrows, therefore, asked for a pillow. *Kauravas*, conscious of their being the *Kuru* princes, gave him a soft pillow, which *Bhishma* declines as inappropriate for a warrior fallen on the battle field. When he asked *Arjuna* to provide him a pillow, the true blue-blooded warrior that *Arjuna* was, sensed his intention and shot three arrows on the ground near his head, making it suitable for his head to rest his head on, making *Bhishma* happy and satisfied, saying that he has provided the most suitable pillow for him to rest his head on - 'अभिमन्त्राय नात्नेव शिरसा लम्बताब्रवीत्। शिरो मे लम्बतेऽत्यर्थमुपधानं प्रदीयताम्।' ततो नृपाः समाजह्नुस्तनूनि च मृदूनि च। उपधानानि मुख्यानि नैच्छत्तानि पितामहः।। अथाब्रवीन्नरव्याघ्रः प्रहसन्निव तान् नृपान्। नैतानि वीरशय्यासु युक्तरूपाणि पार्थिवाः ततो वीक्ष्य नरश्रेष्ठमभ्यभाषत पाण्डवम्। धनंजय दीर्घबाहो सर्वलोकमहारथाम्।। धनंजय महाबाहो शिरो मे तात लम्बते। दीयतामुपधानं वै यद्युक्तमिह मन्यसे ।।..त्वं पार्थ समर्थो वै श्रेष्ठः सर्वधनुष्मताम्।। क्षत्रधर्मस्य वेत्ता च बुद्धिसत्त्वगुणान्वितः ।..गृह्यानुमन्त्र्य गाण्डीवं शरान्सन्नतपर्वणः । अनुमान्य महात्मानं भरतानां महारथम् त्रिभिस्तीक्ष्णैर्महावेगैरन्वगृह्णाच्छिरः शरैः । अभिप्राये तु विदिते धर्मात्मा सव्यसाचिना ।। अनुष्यद भरतश्रेष्ठो भीष्मो धर्मार्थतत्त्ववित् ।.. शयनानुरूपं पाण्डवोपहितं । यद्यन्यथाः प्रपद्येथाः शपेयं त्वामहं रुषा ||'.

Bhishma then having received an appropriate pillow for a righteous warrior, declares that any other thing would have displeased him. He will look forward now for the auspicious time waiting for the Sun to move to the northern hemisphere. When he saw medicine men for treating his wounds, *Bhishma* requests them to be sent away duly remunerated, since for one who has attained the highest end which a *Kshatriya* could hope, what need is there for medicine men? 'धन दत्त्वा विसृज्यन्तां पूजयित्वा चिकित्सकाः । एवंगते मयेदानीं वैद्यैः कार्यमिहास्ति किम्||'. Then he instructed them to cremate him along with the arrows, when the time comes.

When after giving due respects to the grand sire, *Pandavas* return to their camps, well satisfied with their success. *Krishna* arrives there and assures success, with *Bhishma* whom they could not have defeated waiting to give up his soul 'दिष्ट्या जयसि कौरव्य दिष्ट्या भीष्मो निपातितः ।'. *Yudhishthira* responds saying that the success was entirely due to his grace on them 'तव प्रसादाद्विजयः क्रोधात्तव पराजयः । त्वं हि नः शरणं कृष्ण भक्तानामभयंकरः ।। अनाश्चर्यो जयस्तेषां येषां त्वमसि केशव । रक्षिता समरे नित्यं नित्यं चापि हिते रतः ।। सर्वथा त्वां समासाद्य नाश्चर्यमिति मे मतिः ।'.

The subsequent morning *Kauravas* and *Pandavas* gather again around *Bhishma*, shorn of their arms and armaments, taking their places according to precedence. *Bhishma* was going through acute pain, breathing heavily. Then lifting his head he uttered single word *water*. *Duryodhana* summoned for water and many rushed with vessel full of pure water. But *Bhishma* declined saying that he would not like accept anything that has earthly flavour, having given all those temporal attachments. Though still he rests on the bed or arrows, he has risen high above from the gross world, waiting for the Sun to pass to the northern hemisphere 'भीष्मस्तु वेदना धैर्यान्निगृह्य भरतर्षभ। अभितप्तः शरैश्चैव निःश्वसन्नुरगो यथा ' शराभितप्तकायोऽपि शस्त्रसम्पातमूर्छितः । पानीयमिति सम्प्रेक्ष्य राजन्यानभ्यभाषत ।। ततस्ते क्षत्रियाः राजन्नुपाजह्रुः समन्ततः । भक्ष्यानुच्चावचानराजन्वारिकुम्भांश्च शीतलान्। उपानीतं तु पानीयं दृष्ट्वा शान्तनवोऽब्रवीत्। नाद्यातीता मया शक्या भोगाः केचन मानुषाः ।। अपक्रान्तो मनुष्येभ्यः शरशय्या गतो ह्यहम्, प्रतीक्षमाणस्तिष्ठामि शशिसूर्ययोः ।।'. Then he lovingly asks for *Arjuna* and then seeing him asks to provide divine waters to soothe his burning body and quench his thirsty throat. *Arjuna* strikes an arrow on the ground on right side of *Bhishma's* head from where stream of river *Ganga* springs, auspicious and pure, to fall direct in *Bhishma's* mouth. People are surprised and pleased, *Kauravas* shaking to their roots seeing this miraculous deed 'दह्यतीव शरीरं मे संवृतस्य तवेषुभिः । मर्माणि परिदूयन्ते मुखं च परिशुष्यति ।। वेदनार्तशरीरस्य प्रयच्छापो ममार्जुन ! त्वं हि शक्तो महेष्वास दातुमापो यथाविधि ।।..सधाय च शरं दीप्तमभिमन्त्र्य स पाण्डवः । पर्जन्यास्त्रेण संयोज्य सर्वलोकस्य पश्यतः ।। अविध्यत्पृथिवीं पार्थः पार्श्वे भीष्मस्य दक्षिणे । उत्पपात ततो धारा वारिणो विमला शुभा ।। शीतस्यामृतकल्पस्य दिव्यगन्धरसस्य च । अतर्पयत्ततः पार्थः शीतया जलधारया ।। भीष्म कुरूणामृषभ दिव्यकर्मपराक्रमम्।'.

Thus satisfied and pleased, *Bhsihma* praises *Arjuna* saying that Narada had already told me

out him being Nara who will perform great deeds with *Krishna*, which even gods will not be able to lfill with the help of *Indra*. 'कथितो नारदेनासि पूर्वर्षिरमितद्युते | वासुदेवसहायस्त्वं महत्कर्म करिष्यसि || यन्नोत्सहति देवेन्द्रः सह देवैरपि ध्रुवम्|' ne he counsels *Duryodhana* again to give up his anger, stop the war and give *Pandavas* their share, ereby saving *Kuru* family from extermination. Indeed, no other creator is to be seen in this world than *rishna* and no other warrior than *Arjuna* - 'एतस्य कर्ता लोकेऽस्मिन्नान्यः कश्चन विद्यते | .. सर्वस्मिन्मनुषे लोके वेत्त्येको हि धनंजयः | गो वा देवकीपुत्रो नान्यो कश्चन ||' . It is impossible to win *Arjuna* in a war, therefore come to some settlement. Do when *Krishna* is still well-disposed to *Kauravas* - 'अशक्यः पाण्डवस्तात युद्धे जेतु कथंचन | अमानुषाणि कर्माणि यस्यैतानि महात्मनः नेन सत्ववता संख्ये शूरेणाहवशोभिना | कृतिना समरे राजन्संधिर्भवतु मा चिरम्|| यावत्कृष्णो महाबाहुः स्वाधीनः कुरुसत्तम | तावत् पार्थेन शूरेण संधिस्ते तात यनाम्||..एतत्क्षममहं मन्ये तव चैव कुलस्य च ||'. Saying these words, *Bhishma* fell silent, with extreme exhaustion in ne body. Then controlling the pain, he engaged his mind in adoration of the divine. *Duryodhana* did not peak but sat with his head bowed down. *Sanjaya* said to *Dhritarashtra* that he did not seem to like the ords of wisdom spoken 'धर्मार्थसहितं वाक्यंश्रुत्वा हितमनामयम्| नारोचयत पुत्रस्ते मुमुर्षुरिव भेषजम्||'.

When *Karna* heard the news that *Bhishma's* has fallen, he leaves to meet him. Hesees him lying n the bed of arrows with his eyes closed. Going by his side, he softly calls him with eyes brimming with ears, *Bhishma, Bhishma, the great sire of the Kurus, I am Karna, son of Radha, who seen with hateful yes was always been an impediment in your sight* 'मिमीलनाक्षं तं वीरं साश्रुकण्ठस्तदा वृषः | भीष्म भीष्म महाबाहो इत्युवाच महाद्युतिः राधेयोऽहं कुरुश्रेष्ठ नित्यमक्षिगतस्तव | द्वेष्योऽहं तव सर्वत्र इति चैनमुवाच ||'. Hearing these words, *Bhishma* opens his eyes lowly and looks at him lovingly. Then seeing that no one else is in the vicinity, he embraced him, saying hat it was true that he was always kept at a distance. But had he not come to meet him, then he would urely have been displeased. Then as if his revealing the great secret of his identity he tells him that he is not *Radha's* son but *Kunti's* son, his father is not the charioteer but *Surya* 'कौन्तेयस्त्वं न राधेयो न तवाधिरथः पिता | सूर्य स्त्वं महाबाहो विदितो नारदान्मया ||'. This he was informed by *Narada* and *Vyasa* and he had never doubted their words. He had never hated him, though had spoken many harsh words, because he was obliged to align himself with *Duryodhana* against *Pandavas.* Therefore he desired to weaken his *will* to fight them. At the same time since his birth was occasioned by transgression in moral code, he was by fated to align with the evil *Duryodhana* and not with noble *Pandavas.* He is fully aware that there is no other braver than he, being equal to *Arjuna* and *Krishna* 'न त्वया सदृशः कश्चित् पुरुषेष्वमरोपम | कुलभेदभयाच्चाहं सदा परुषमुक्तवान्|| इष्वस्त्रे चास्त्रसंधाने लाघवेऽस्त्रबले तथा | सदृशः फाल्गुनेनासि कृष्णेन च महात्मना ||'. He had spoken hard words only to protect the *Kuru* family and now that he is dieing he hopes the enmity between *Pandavas* and *Kauravas* will end 'सोदर्याः पाण्डवा वीरा भ्रातरस्तेऽरिसूदन | संगच्छ तैर्महाबाहो मम चेदिच्छसि प्रियम्|| मया भवतु निवृत्तं वैरमादित्यनन्दन | पृथिव्यां सर्वराजानो भवन्त्वद्य निरामयाः ||'.

Then *Karna* with all humility replies him that he is fully aware of all the facts spoken by him. But it should not be forgotten that his mother had forsaken him in the stream and it was the charioteer who has saved and nurtured him. *Duryodhana* gave him power and prestige for which he had promised to stand by him till the end, even as *Krishna* was standing by the *Pandavas*. He knows that the animosity of the *Kauravas* for *Pandavas* has gone to the extreme end, which now cannot be avoided. He has decided to fight for *Kauravas* as already resolved and seeks his blessings. If he has spoken any harsh or unpleasant words to him on any occasion then he seeks his pardon. *Bhishma* replies sadly saying that he permits him to fight with righteousness and without hatred as per his desires, saying that his only regret is that his efforts for reconciliation did not succeed.

After offering his respects to *Bhishma, Karna* leaves remarking that truly there are no fruits to be had in this life but only duty to be performed. Otherwise, how come a righteous one like *Bhishma* who has not hurt any soul should be destined to die lying on the ground 'न नूनं सुकृतस्येह फलं कश्चित्समश्नुते | यत्र धर्मपरो वृद्धः शेते भुवि भवानिह |'. *Karna* says that he is fully aware that *Arjuna* is like ferocious fire, and *Krishna* is like tempest wind 'यादृशोऽग्निः समुद्भूतस्तादृक्पार्थो न संशयः || यथा वायुस्तथाग्निस्तथा कृष्णो न संशयः ||', but with the grandsire's permission he would fight *Arjuna* in battle 'तमद्याहं पाण्डवं युद्धशौण्डममृष्यमाणो भवता चानुशिष्टः | आशीविषं दृष्टिहरं सुघोरं शूर प्रक्ष्याम्यस्त्रमस्तोऽनुहन्तुम्||'. *Bhishma* acknowledges *Karna's* importance to *Kauravas* saying that he is the haven

for them like ocean is for the streams, *Surya* for the luminous objects, like *Vishnu* for the gods 'समुद्र इ सिन्धूनां ज्योतिषामिव भास्करः | सत्यस्य च यथा सन्तो बीजानामिव चोर्वरा || पर्जन्य इव भूतानां प्रतिष्ठा सुहृदां भव | बान्धवास्त्वानुजीवन्तु सहस्राक्षमिवामराः मनहा भव शत्रूणां मित्राणां नन्दिवर्धनः | कौरवाणां भव गतिर्यथा विष्णुर्दिवौकसाम्||'. Then as final assurance and benediction *Bhishma* tells *Karna* that he is as dear to him as *Duryodhana* is and truly is his well-wisher as he is *Duryodhana* Therefore, becoming his true friend and thinking everything as your own protect all the *Kauravas*' Hearing these words *Karna* offered him his respects and departed to meet *Duryodhana*.

Chapter - IX

When *Dhritarashtra* heard of *Bhishma's* fall, he fell in great depression, loosing all peace of mind, mourning that the *Kaurava* army was bereft of glory and worthless like sky without stars, like pace without air, like land that is barren, like speech without culture 'पतिते भरतश्रेष्ठे बभूव कुरुवाहिनी | द्यौरिवापेतनक्षत्रा तं खमिव वायुना || विपन्नसस्येव मही वाक्चैवासंस्कृतानथा | असुरीव यथा सेना निगृहीते नृपे बलौ ||. After taking leave of *Bhishma*, *Karna* oo goes straight to *Duryodhana,* who seeing him expresses his pleasure, since after *Bhishma,* it was *Karna* whom he relied upon, whom even *Bhishma* had described as the most capable warrior and a great eader. Therefore, the time has come for him to show his valour 'भीष्मेण हि महाबाहुः सर्वक्षत्रस्य पश्यतः || रथेषु गण्यमानेषु लविक्रमशालिषु | संख्यातोऽर्धरथः कर्णो द्विगुणः सन्नरर्षभः ||...हा कर्ण इति चाक्रन्दान्कालोऽयमेत चाब्रुवत्|| सहि शक्तो रणे राजंस्त्रातुमस्मान्महाभयात्| त्रिदशानिव गोविन्दः सततं सुमहाभयात्||'. The soldiers clamoured for his leadership with enthusiasm - 'कर्णं हि कुरवोऽस्मार्षुः स हि देवव्रतोपमः |..चक्रुशुः कर्ण कर्णेति तभारत पार्थिवाः ||', *Duryodhana* saying that after *Bhishma* who else can lead his army 'सनाथमिव मन्येऽहं भवता पालितं बलम्| अत्र किं नु समर्थं यद्धितं तत्सम्पधार्यताम्||..स भवान्वीक्ष्य सर्वेषु मामकेषु महात्मसु | पश्य सेनापतिं युक्तामनु शान्तनवादिह ||'.

Karna was extremely pleased with the confidence which was placed in him, saying that now that *Bhisma* has fallen on the battle field, as if *Sun* has fallen from the sky on earth, it would be difficult to meet the challenge from *Arjuna*, even as mountains would find it difficult to face tempestuous winds. Therefore, it has fallen on him to save the *Kauravas* even as it had fallen earlier on *Bhishma*. This day he has taken this responsibility without any fear knowing well that life is uncertain and even *Bhishma* skilled in warfare had to die. For protecting *Kauravas* and destroying *Pandavas* he will this day fearlessly he will fight on the battle-field. He knows that where *Yudhishthira* stands with his brothers, *Krishna* and others, that army would be difficult to be defeated. It is however cannot be said that he will not go to confront them. Therefore, let one who deceives his friend or whose devotion to his master is weak or in whose mind is evil, let no such person may accompany him 'निपातिते शान्तनवे महारथे दिवकरे भुतलमास्थिते यथा | न पार्थिवाः सोढुमलं धनंजयं गिरिप्रवोढारमिवानिलं द्रुमाः ||..मयाकुरूणां परिपाल्यमाहवे बलं यथा तेन महात्मना तथा || समाहितं चात्मनि भारमीदृशं जगन्तथानित्यमिदं च लक्षयं | निपातितं चाहवशौण्डमाहवे कथं नु कुर्यामहमीदृशेभयम्||...यस्मिन् राजा सत्यधृतिर्युधिष्ठिरः समास्थितो भीमसेनार्जुनौ च | वासुदेवः सात्यकिः सृंजयाश्च मन्ये बलं तदजय्यं महीपैः ||...न त्वेवाहं गमिष्यामि तेषां मध्ये शूराणां तत्र चाहं ब्रवीमि | मित्रद्रुहो दुर्बलभक्तयो ये पापात्मानो न ममैते सहायाः ||'.

In the meantime, *Bhishma* continued to remain on the bed of arrows, like the great ocean lying dried at the tempestuous winds at the time of dissolution of the worlds, 'शरतल्पे महात्मनं शयानममितौजसम्| महावातसमूहेन समुद्रमिव शोषितम्||'. Seeing the grandfather who was a terror to all warriors, laying down in this manner killed by *Arjuna*, the hopes of *Kauravas* vanished 'दृष्ट्वा पितामहं भीष्मं सर्वक्षत्रान्तकं गुरुम्| दिव्यैरस्त्रैर्महेष्वासं पातितं सव्यसाचिना || जयाशा तवपुत्राणां सम्भग्ना शर्म शर्म | अपाराणमिव द्वीपमगाधे गाधमिच्छताम्||'. Seeing him lying in this manner, an exceedingly sad *Karna* reflected indeed, in this world good conduct does not seem to bring good end, seeing such a great soul is suffering untold agonies. Indeed even as fire accompanied by wind destroys all the grass and vegetation, even so will undoubtedly will *Arjuna* with *Krishna* will destroy *Kauravas* 'न नूनं सुकृतस्येहि फलम् कश्चित्समश्नुते || यत्र धर्मपरो वृद्धः शेते भुवि भवानिह |...येन येन प्रसरतो वाय्वग्नी सहितौ वने || तेन तेन प्रदहतो भूरिगुल्मतृणद्रुमान्| यादृशोऽग्निः समुद्भूतस्तादृक् पार्थोन संशयः || यथा वायुर्नरव्याघ्रः तथा कृष्णो न संशयः |'. Then before taking leave, he declares to *Bhishma* that if he so desires he will soon kill *Arjuna* with an angry eye like a poisonous serpent 'त्वमद्याहं पाण्डवं युद्धशौण्डममृष्यमाणो भवतो चानुशिष्टः | आशीविषं दृष्टिहरं सुघोरं शूरं शक्त्यान्यास्त्रबलन्निहन्तुम् ||'

Hearing these words spoken by *Karna, Bhishma* blessed him to becomes like sea for the streams, like Sun for the starts, noble among the truthful, like fruitful land for the seeds, like rains for the creatures, becomes dear towards your companions even as *Indra* is towards the gods, like a scourge to the enemies and compassionate to friends, like Krishna for the gods, you be refuge for *Kauaravas.*

Karna is his grandson to him like *Duryodhana* is and as his well-wisher as he should protect him - 'समुद्र इव सिन्धूनां ज्योतिषामिव भास्करः | सत्यस्य च यथा सन्तो बीजानामिव चोर्वरा || पर्जन्य इव भूतानां प्रतिष्ठा सुहृदां भव | बान्धवास्त्वानुजीवन्तु सहस्राक्षमिवामराः || मानहा भव शत्रूणां मित्राणां नन्दिवर्धनः | कौरवाणां भव गतिर्यथा विष्णुर्दिवौकसाम्|| भवान्पौत्रसमोऽस्माकं यथा दुर्योधनस्तथा | तवापि धर्मतः सर्वे यथा तस्य वयं तथा || ...स सत्यसंगरो भूत्वा ममेदमिति निश्चितः | कुरूणां पालय बलं यथा दुर्योधनस्तथा ||'.

When *Duryodhana* sees well endowed with arms in the chariot he becomes happy declaring h' feels that he will well protected therefore, he should tells the next steps to be taken 'सनाथमिव मन्येऽहं भवता पालितं बलम्|' to which as one endowed with wealth and wisdom, there could be no one else than he himself to decide about the course to be adopted. *Duryodhana* tells him that an army without a leader would sink like a boat without a person to ply it. Therefore tell who among the great rulers on his side who could take up the leadership, *Karna* unhesitatingly said that even though they all are capable, they are between them aspirants, therefore, it is only *Drona* 'श्रेष्ठः सेनाप्रणेतृणां स नः सेनापतिर्भवेत ||'who is well qualified to lead them, being as capable as *Kartikeya* was to lead the gods - 'अयं च सर्वयोधानामाचार्यः स्थविरो गुरुः | युक्तः सेनापतिः कर्तुं द्रोणः शस्त्रभृतां वरः || को हि तिष्ठति दुर्धर्षे द्रोणे शस्त्रभृतां वरे | सेनापतिः स्यादन्योऽस्माच्छुक्राङ्गिरसदर्शनात्||.. एवं दुर्योधनाचार्यमाशु सेनापतिं कुरु | जिगीषन्तोऽसुरान्संख्ये कार्तिकेयमिवामराः ||'. His suggestion was accepted with popular approbation as indeed *Drona* was what *Shiva* was among *Rudras*, Fire among *Vasus*, *Kubera* among *Yakshas*, *Vasishtha* among the men of *Wisdom*, *Sun* among the *luminous*, *Yama* among the ancestors, *Moon* among the stars - 'रुद्राणामिव कापाली वसूनामिव पावकः | कुबेर इव यक्षाणां मरुतामिव वासवः || वसिष्ठ इव विप्राणां तेजसामिव भास्करः | पितृणामिव धर्मेन्द्रो यादसामिव चाम्बुराट्|| नक्षत्राणामिव शशी दितिजानामिवोशनाः ||'.

Feeling honoured, *Drona* vows to live up to the confidence which has been reposed in him to fight *Pandavas*. क्षत्र code among the warriors was quite different during the life and times which *Vyasa* was depicting from what came later to be in *Kali yuga*, *Drona* being not an ordinary fighter but one who fights as duty bound and not from personal likes and dislikes. Like *Bhsihma*, he too was constrained to fight on *Duryodhana* behalf because of his obligation to him, since it was at his instance that he came to be appointed as their teacher in their young days. However he makes two points clear, though he is fully qualified to undertake the task : *firstly*, he would not be able to kill *Drishtadhyumna* since his own death is ordained at the hand of *Panchala* prince, *secondly*, *Pandavas* being also his disciples may not confront him - 'वेदं षडङ्गं वेदाहमर्थविद्यां च मानवीम्| त्रैयम्बकमथेष्वस्त्रं शस्त्राणि विविधानि च || ये चाप्युक्ता मयि गुणा भवद्भिर्जयकाङ्क्षिभिः |...पार्षतं तु रणे राजन्न हनिष्ये कथंचन | स हि सृष्टो वधार्थाय ममैव पुरुषर्षभ || योधयिष्यामि सैन्यानि नाशयन्सर्वसोमकान्| न च मां पाण्डवा युद्धे योधयिष्यन्ति हर्षिताः ||.

Then *Drona* appointed to lead *Kauarava's* army keeping *Duryodhana* in the front and *Karna* in the rear and supported by many rulers. One thought dominated all, *Pandavas* wound find it difficult to withstand *Karna's* might, not even for gods under *Indra's* leadership, then what to speak of *Pandavas*? Earlier *Bhishma* had protected them with love and compassion even when they were fighting on the battle field but who will save them from *Karna's* sharp arrows? 'हृष्टाश्च बहवो योधास्तत्राजल्पन्त वेगिताः || न हि कर्णं रणे दृष्ट्वा युधि स्थास्यन्ति पाण्डवाः | कर्णो हि समरे शक्तो जेतुं देवान्सवासवान् || किमु पाण्डुसुतान्युद्धे हीनवीर्यपराक्रमान्| भीष्मेण तु रणे पार्थाः पालिता बहुमानिना || तांस्तु कर्णः शितैर्बाणैर्नाशयिष्यति संयुगे ||'. When the forces were ready for the battle to commence he saw *Arjuna* was shining resplendent like Sun at the time of the dissolution of the worlds, as the greatest among the warriors and *Gandeeva* being great among the bows, *Krishna* the foremost among beings with *Sudarshana* as his charioteer 'पिबमाणेन विहितो वामराजेन भास्वता | व्युहप्रमुखतस्तेषां तस्थतुः पुरुषर्षभौ |...यथा प्रज्वलितः सूर्यो युगान्ते वै वसुन्धराम्| शाप्यन्दृश्येत हि तथा केतुः सर्वत्र धीमतः | योधानामर्जुनः श्रेष्ठो गाण्डीवं धनुषां वरम्| वासुदेवश्च भूतानां चक्राणां च सुदर्शनम्||'.

From the moment the battle begins, *Drona* begins the destruction of the *Pandava's* army, creating confusion and terror among their soldiers 'स तीव्रं कोपमास्थाय रथे समरदुर्जयः | व्यधमत्पाण्डवानीकमभ्राणीव सदागतिः ||..तमन्तकमिव क्रुद्धमापतन्तं यतव्रतम्| दृष्ट्वा सम्प्राद्रवन्योधाः पाण्डवस्य ततस्ततः ||..शूराणां हर्षजननो भीरूणां भयवर्धनः | द्यावापृथिव्योर्विवरं पूरयामास सर्वतः ||'. Extremely elated by his own valor, *Drona* tells *Duryodhana* to ask any favour from him and promptly he does not fail to demand *Yudhishthira* to be captured alive and brought as a prisoner 'ददासि चेद्वरं मह्यं जीवग्राहं युधिष्ठिरं | गृहीत्वा रथिनां श्रेष्ठं मत्समीपमिहानय ||'. *Drona* commends his action pleasantly surprised to see that he was asked to bring *Yudhishthira* as prisoner and not killed, 'धन्यः कुन्तीसुतो राजन्यस्य ग्रहणमिच्छसि | न वधाय सुदुर्धर्ष वरमद्य प्रयाचसे ||' inquiring whether this was since *Yudhishthira* was beyond hatred or to hand over to him his share and

ve in friendship with them to preserve the family. 'धन्यः कुन्तिसुतो राजन्यस्य ग्रहणमिच्छसि | न वधार्थं सुदुर्धर्षं वरमद्य प्रयाचसे || किमर्थं च नरव्याघ्र न वधं तस्य काङ्क्षसे | नशंससि क्रियामेतां मत्तो दुर्योधन ध्रुवम्|| आहोस्विद्धर्मराजस्य द्वेष्टा तस्य न विद्यते | यदीच्छसि त्वं जीवन्तं कुलं रक्षसि आत्मन: || अथवा भरतश्रेष्ठ निर्जित्य युधि पाण्डवान्| राज्य सम्प्रति दत्त्वा च सौभ्रात्र कर्तुमिच्छसि || धन्यः कुन्तिसुतो राजा सुजात चास्य धीमतः | अजातशत्रुता सत्या यस्य यत्स्निह्यते भवान्||'.

Drona's fond hopes were dashed no sooner than they were expressed. *Sanjaya* pointing out that *Duryodhana's* cunning mind became apparent soon thereafter 'द्रोणेन चैवमुक्तस्य तव पुत्रस्य भारत | सहसा निःसृतो भावो योऽस्य नित्यं हृदि स्थितः ||'. He tells *Drona* that he cannot hope to win the war by killing *Yudhishthira* because once he is killed his brother will undoubtedly wipe out all the *Kauravas*. Even if all of them are killed, even then *Krishna* will take upon himself to destroy them all and hand over the reins to *Kunti* and *Draupadi*. Therefore, once *Yudhishthira* is taken a prisoner he can make him play the game of dice, which unable to refuse will surely lose. Having again to go in exile, they will leave him the sole ruler of the kingdom - 'वधे कुन्तिसुतस्याजौ नाचार्य विजयो मम | हते युधिष्ठिरे पार्था हन्युः सर्वान्हि नो ध्रुवम्|| न च शक्या रणे सर्वे निहन्तुममरैरपि | यदि सर्वे हनिष्यन्ते पाण्डवाः सगुणा मृधे | ततः कृत्स्नं वशे कृत्वा निःशेषं नृपमण्डलम्|| ससागरवनां स्फीतां विजित्य वसुधामिमाम्| विष्णुर्दास्यति कृष्णायै कुन्त्यै वा पुरुषोत्तमः || स एव ते यो शेषः स्यात् स एवास्मान्न शेषयत् || सत्यप्रतिज्ञे त्वानीते पुनर्द्यूतेन निर्जिते | पुनर्यास्यन्त्यरण्याय पाण्डवास्तमनुव्रताः || सोऽयं मम जयो व्यक्तं दीर्घकालं भविष्यति | अतो न वधमिच्छामि धर्मराजस्य कर्हिचित्||'. *Duryodhana's* hatred for *Pandavas* was not so much shaped by his dislike for them as it was by his greed to enjoy the ill-gotten possessions without any interference for them.

Drona cautiously qualifies his ability to take *Yudhishthira* a prisoner with *Arjuna* for his protection him and never being away from him though he had assured that he would give up his life rather than kill *Drona*, his teacher. He well endowed in arms given by *Rudra*, besides being young and an accomplished warrior. Therefore if *Arjuna* is separated from *Yudhishthira* one way or other then *Yudhishthira* is as good as taken a prisoner 'न चेद्युधिष्ठिरं वीरः पालयत्यर्जुनो युधि | मन्यस्व पाण्डवश्रेष्ठमानीतं वशमात्मनः || संशय स च शिष्यो मत्पूर्वः श्चास्त्रकर्मणि | तरुणः सुकृतैर्युक्त एकायनगतश्च ह || अस्त्राणीन्द्राच्च ते रुद्रान्नो नामर्षयास्यहम्|| स चापकृष्यता युद्धाद् येनोपायेन शक्यते | अपनीते ततः पार्थे धर्मराजो जितस्त्वया || फाल्गुनस्य समीपे तु नहि शक्यो युधिष्ठिरः | ग्रहितु समरे राजन्सेन्द्रैरपि सुरासुरैः ||'. *Duryodhana* knew of the affection which *Drona* had for *Arjuna*. Therefore, these confidential talk he communicated to one and all, so that he may not waver later form his resolve 'पाण्डवेषु सापेक्षो द्रोणं जानाति ते सुतः | ततः प्रतिज्ञास्थैर्यार्थं समन्त्रो बहुलीकृतः ||'.

When the news is heard by *Yudhishthira* he cautions his brothers of *Drona's* resolve, reminding them of the reservation which he has placed on his task being successful. Therefore he tells *Arjuna* to remain by his side during the battle, so that his resolve may not be successful. But *Arjuna* shows his hesitancy to engage his teacher in the battle saying that he would rather die in the battle rather than be cause of any enmity with the teacher. At the same time even if the space, stars and earth becomes broken in hundred pieces he will not allow *Yudhishthira* to be taken a prisoner - and tells them 'यथा मे न वधः कार्य आचार्यस्य कदाचन || तथा तव परित्यागो न मे राजोश्रकाङ्क्षितः | अप्येव पाण्डव प्राणानुत्सृजेयमहं युधि || प्रतीपो नाहमाचार्यं भवेयं वै कदाचन | ..पतेद्द्यौः सनक्षत्रा पृथिवी शकलीभवेत्|| न त्वां द्रोणो निगृह्णीयाज्जीवमाने मयि ध्रुवम्|..न स्मराम्यनृतं तावन्न स्मरामि पराजयम्| न स्मरामि प्रतिश्रुत्य किंचिदप्यनृतं कृतम्||'.

Therefore, in spite of ferocious battles, where he sweeps the battle filed like 'व्यचरत्पृतनां द्रोणो दहन्कक्षमिवानलः' *Drona* was not able to take *Yudhishthira* a prisoner, with *Arjuna* taking very occasion to be near him. *Arjuna* was fighting bravely, neither quarters nor the space, neither earth nor the sky being visible under the shower of his arrows - 'न दिशो नान्तरिक्षं च न द्यौर्नैव च मेदिनी |..नादृश्यत तदा राजन्स्तत्र किंचन संयुगे | बाणान्धकारं सहसा कृतं गाण्डीवधन्वना ||'. Soon the Sun sets down on the western horizon and the battle for the day comes to an end. *Drona* returns crestfallen declaring that he had already told earlier that *Arjuna* is not easy to be defeated in battle even by gods, confirming that in truth both *Krishna* and *Arjuna* are impossible to be defeated by him 'कृत्यावहारं सन्याना द्रोणः परमदुर्मनाः | दुर्योधनमभिप्रेक्ष्य सव्रीडमिदमब्रवीत्|| उक्तमेतन्मया पूर्वं न तिष्ठति धनंजये | शक्यो ग्रहीतुं संग्रामे देवैरपि युधिष्ठिरः ||...सा विशङ्कीर्वचो मह्यमाजेयौ कृष्णपाण्डवौ ||'.

At that time *Susharma* of *Trigarta* territory comes on the battle field with intention of separating *Arjuna* from *Yudhishthira* fight to the last of the soldiers - 'अद्यास्त्वनर्जुना भूमिरत्रिगर्ताथ वा पुनः | सत्यं ते

प्रतिजानीमो नैतन्मिथ्या भाविष्यति ||'. *Arjuna*, proud warrior that he is, resolves to meet the challenged, assuring him in the intervening period protection from *Satyajit*, the *Panchala* prince. 'आहूतो न निवर्तयामिति मेव्रतमाहितम्| संशप्तकाश्च मां राजन्नाह्वयन्ति महाधृते ||..अयं वै सत्यजिद्राजन्नद्य त्वां रक्षिता युधि | ध्रियमाणे च पाञ्चाल्ये नाचार्यः काममाप्स्यति ||'. *Arjuna* fight with extraordinary valour which makes *Susharma* stand in awe and fear, as the poet say, as if transformed in a picture - 'चित्रं पटे यथा न्यस्ता कुशलैः शिल्पिभिर्नरैः ||'. Then *Arjuna* tells *Krishna* to take his chariot where the *Samsaptakas* have gathered which *Krishna* does smilingly and wishing him good fortune courses his chariot in circles to misguide the enemies as the gods did ion deceiving *asuras* 'मण्डलानि ततश्चक्रे गतप्रत्यागतानि च | यथा शक्ररथो राजन्युद्धे देवासुरे पुरा ||.

Seeing this *Samshaptakas* with their strong *Narayana army* repulse his attack with a shower of arrows making both *Arjuna* and *Krishna* as if disappear from sight 'अथ नारायणाः क्रुद्ध विविधायुधपाणयः | छादयन्तः शरव्रातैः परिवव्रुर्धनंजयम्|| अदृश्यं च मुहूर्तेन चक्रुस्ते भरतर्षभ | कृष्णेन सहितं युद्धे कुन्तिपुत्रं धनंजयम्||'. Then an angry *Arjuna* doubled his effort, sounded his *Devadatta* conch and brought out his *Gandeeva* and aimed his terrible *Tvashtra* weapon on *Samshaptakas* creating a great illusion of their own *Arjuna* and *Krishna-forms*, whereupon their soldiers confused began killing their own soldiers, saying this is *Arjuna* and this is *Krishna* 'क्रुद्धस्तु फाल्गुनः संख्ये द्विगुणीकृतविक्रमः | गाण्डीवं धनुरामृज्य तूर्णं जग्राह संयुगे || बद्ध्वा च भृकुटीं वक्त्रे क्रोधस्य प्रतिलक्षणम्| देवदत्तं महाशङ्खं पूरयामास पाण्डवः || आत्मनः प्रतिरूपैस्तैर्नानारूपैर्विमोहिताः | अन्योन्यमर्जुनं मत्वा स्वमात्मानं च जघ्निरे || अयमर्जुनोऽयं गोविन्द इमौ पाण्डवयादवौ | इति ब्रुवाणाः सम्मूढा जघ्नुरन्योन्यमाहवे ||'. When deluded in this manner, *Samshaptakas* continued to shower their arrows, making *Arjuna* and *Krishna* disappear under that shower. Thinking that both *Arjuna* and *Krishna* are killed *Samsaptakas* then return to their camps 'हन्यमाना वीरेण क्षत्रियाः कालचोदिताः | व्यसृज्यन्शरजालानि पार्थे नानाविधानि च || न ध्वजो नार्जुनस्तत्र न रथो न च केशवः | प्रत्यदृश्यत घोरेण शरवर्षेण संवृतः || ततस्ते लब्धलक्षत्वादन्योन्यमभिचुक्रुशुः | हतौ कृष्णाविति प्रीत्या वासांस्यादुधुवुस्तदा ||'.

At that time, tired and heavily perspiring *Krishna* does not see *Arjuna* around. He calls him with disquiet loudly to reveal his whereabouts and whether he is alive? Hearing his voice, *Arjuna* appears appearing like *Rudra* at the time of final dissolution, clearing the haze of the arrows destroying *Samshaptakas'* entire battalion with the weapon given to him by *Vayu* ततः परिप्लवदे कृष्णः खिन्नश्चार्जुनमब्रवीत्| क्वासि पार्थ न पश्ये त्वां कच्चिज्जीवसि शत्रुहन्|| तस्य तद्भाषितं श्रुत्वा त्वरमाणो धनंजयः | वायव्यास्त्रेण तैरस्ता शरवृष्टिमपाहरत्|| तदबभौ रौद्रबीभत्सं बीभत्सायां तमाहवे | आक्रीडमिव रुद्रस्य घ्नतः कालात्ययं पशून्||'. This was one of those rare moments when *Vyasa* shows *Krishna* displaying his human face, with human anxieties, without transgressing the limits of human possibilities, though having risen above others as a man wise in Wisdom, subtly emphasizing his *divine* status.

When *Arjuna* was thus engaged in battling *Trigartas* and *Samshaptakas*, *Drona* takes the opportunity to strike back at *Yudhishthira*. Observing this, *Drishtadhyumna* requests *Yudhishthira* to allow him to face *Drona's* assault assuring that *Drona* will never succeed in his attempt 'द्रोणस्य यतमानस्य नैष्यसि सुव्रत | अहमावारयिष्यामि द्रोणमद्य सहानुगम्|| मयि जीवति कौरव्य नोद्वेगं कर्तुमर्हसि | न हि शक्तो रणे द्रोणो विजेतु मां कथंचन ||'. Seeing *Drishtadhyumna* before him, *Drona* too shows disquiet and depression since he knew that *Panchala* prince was destined to be his exterminator 'अनिष्टदर्शनं दृष्ट्वा धृष्टद्युम्नमवस्थितम्| क्षणेनैवाभवद्द्रोणो नातिहृष्टमना इव || स हि जातो महाराज द्रोणस्य निधनं प्रति | मर्त्यधर्मतया तस्माद् भारद्वाजो व्यामुह्यत ||'. But without being deterred by that fact, he increases his offensive against *Pandavas* - 'द्रोणस्तु पाण्डवानीकेचकार कदनं महत्| यथा देवगणं विष्णुः सुरासुरनमस्कृतः ||..तं दहन्तमनीकानि रथोदार कृतान्तवत्| सर्वतोऽभ्यद्रवन्द्रोणं कुन्तीपुत्रपुरोगमाः ||', making *Pancahalas*, *Kekayas*, *Matsyas* depart from the battle ground even as *Vishnu* created a great havoc among the army of the *asuras* 'द्रोणस्तु पाण्डवानीकं चकार कदनं महत्| यथा दैत्यगणे विष्णुः सुरासुरनमस्कृतः ||'.

Extremely pleased by *Drona's* performance *Duryodhana* spoke to *Karna* to observe *Pandavas* being tormented like forest creatures by lion, *Bhima's* discomfort making him especially happy, hoping this will deter them to hanker for empire again 'पश्य राधेय पञ्चालान्पाण्डून्द्रोणसायकैः | सिंहेनेव मृगान्वन्यान्त्रासितान् दृढधन्वना ||..एष भीमो महाक्रोधी हीनः पाण्डवसृञ्जयैः | मदीयैरावृतो योधैः कर्ण नन्दयतीव माम्|| व्यक्तं द्रोणमयं लोकमद्य पश्यति दुर्मतिः | निराशो जीवितान्नूनमद्य राज्याच्च पाण्डवः ||'. But *Karna* has his own reservation wondering how long *Bhima* would remain quiet humiliated in this manner. They will surely fight with increased anger remembering

Duryodhana's earlier attempt to harm them through poison, fire, game of dice and exile. Therefore, *Drona's* burden is now great needing assistance being provided 'नैष जातु महाबाहुर्जीवन्नाहवमुत्सृजेत्। न चेमान्पुरुषव्याघ्र सहनादान्सहिष्यति ||.. विषाग्निद्यूतसक्लेशान्वनवासं च पाण्डवाः | स्मरमाणा न हास्यन्ति संग्राममिति मे मतिः ||..असंशय कृतास्त्रश्च पर्याप्तश्चापि वारणे | अतिभारमहं मन्ये भारद्वाजे समाहितम्||'. When *Dhritarashtra* exclaims saying *Bhima* and others would be difficult even for gods to defeat. Indeed, all human enterprise is initiated at the instance of divine will, ever action appearing to be under influence of divine will 'व्यथयेयुरिमे सेनां देवानामपि संजय | आहवे ये न्यवर्तन्त वृकोदरमुखा नृपाः || सम्प्रयुक्त किलैवाय दिष्टैर्भवति पूरुषः | तस्मिन्नेव च सर्वार्थाः प्रदृश्यन्ते पृथग्विधाः ||', to which *Sanjaya* responds saying that never earlier has he seen or heard warriors fighting in this manner 'नैतादृशो दृष्टपूर्वः संग्रामो नैव च श्रुतः | द्रोणस्याभावभावे तु प्रसक्ताना यथाभवत्||'.

Among the kings aligned on *Kaurava's* side was *Bhagadatta* of *Pragjyotisha*, known for his elephant brigade. Like *Indra* charging *daityas* on his ऐरावत, 'येन नागेन मघवन्दैत्यदानवान्', he challenged *Bhima*, by no means less skilled in fighting elephants. Seeing this great encounter, soldiers run helter and skelter; finally *Bhima* going under *Bhagadatta's* mighty elephant started tickling its underbelly, which skill was known as अंजलिकावेध, which made the elephant become excited. It ran madly, destroying soldiers and chariots on its way, creating great commotion among *Pandava* army making them lament *Bhima is dead, Bhima is dead*, seeing him nowhere in the great confusion 'पद्भ्यां भीमोऽप्यथो धावंस्तस्य गात्रेष्वलीयत | जानन्नञ्जलिकावेध नापाक्रामत पाण्डवः || गात्राभ्यन्तरगो भूत्वा करेणाताडयन्मुहुः | लालयामास तं नागं वधाकाङ्क्षिणमव्ययम्|| कुलालचक्रवन्नागस्तदा तूर्ण मयाभ्रमत्| नागायुतबलः श्रीमान्कालयानो वृकोदरम्||,... भीमोऽपि नागगात्रेभ्यो विनिःसृत्यापयाज्जवात्| ततः सर्वस्य सैन्यस्य नादः समभवन्महान्|| अहो धिङ् निहतो भीमः कुञ्जरेणेति मारिष | तेन नागेन संत्रस्ता पाण्डवानामनीकिनी ||'.

Arjuna seeing *Bhagadatta* creating great destruction of their army and the tumultuous noise asks *Krishna* to take his chariot where *Bhagadatta* was stationed, so that he may kill him along with his elephant. *Krishna* brings the chariot close by. *Bhagadatta's Trigarta* army and the powerful *Narayanee* army were fighting for the *Kauravas*. But *Arjuna* was of two minds, whether to fight them or go back to protect *Yudhishthira*, 'स तु दोलायमानोऽभूद्द्वैधीभावेन पाण्डवः | वधेन तु नरेन्द्राणामकरोत् तां मृषा तदा ||'. At the moment *Samshaptaka* warriors shower so many arrows on them making *Arjuna* and *Krishna* completely overwhelmed, neither of them being seen in the hail of arrows. *Krishna* is confused and drenched in sweat, observing which *Arjuna* destroys *Susharma's* brothers using his *Brahmastra* 'ततः शतसहस्राणि शराणां नतपर्वणाम्| असृजन्नर्जुने राजन्संशप्तकमहारथाः || नैव कुन्तीसुतः पार्थो नैव कृष्णो जनार्दनः | न हया न रथो राजन् दृश्यन्ते स्म शरैश्चिताः || तदा मोहमनुप्राप्तः सिष्विदे हि जनार्दनः | ततस्तान्प्रायशः पार्थो ब्रह्मास्त्रेण निजघ्निवान्||'. Seeing *Arjuna's* great deed, the enmity soldiers became restless running to all the directions, as when an elephant enters the lake full of lotus flowers, even as *Arjuna* was hailed by all the onlookers. And even *Krishna* struck with wonder bowed down with his both hands saying that the wonderful valour which he had shown can not be matched even by *Indra, Yama or Kuber* 'क्षोभयन्तं तदा सेनां द्विरदं नलिनीमिव | धनंजयं भूतगणाः साधु साध्वित्यपूजयन्|| दृष्ट्वा तत्कर्म पार्थस्य वासवस्येव माधवः | विस्मयं परमं गत्वा प्राञ्जलिस्तमुवाच ह || कौंतत्पार्थ शक्रेण यमेन धनदेन | दुष्करं समरे यत्ते कृतमद्येति मे मतिः ||'. Seeing *Arjuna* kill his brothers, *Susharma* king of *Trigarta* becomes infuriated and hurls an iron missile on *Krishna* 'ततो भुजंगसंकाशां सुपर्मा शक्तिमायसीम्| चिक्षेपार्जुनमादिश्य वासुदेवाय तोमरम्||'. Seeing *Arjuna's* great feat, *Krishna* commends his valour with folded hands saying that such brave deed would not have been possible even for *Indra*, *Yama* or *Kubera* 'दृष्ट्वा तत्कर्म पार्थस्य वासवस्येव माधवः | विस्मयं परमं गत्वा प्राञ्जलिस्तमुवाच ह || कर्मैतत्पार्थ शक्रेण यमेन धनदेन च | दुष्करं समरे यत् ते कृतमद्येति मे मतिः ||'.

When *Krishna* took the chariot to meet *Bhagadatta*, *Sanjaya* says all felt as if he was entering the death's mouth, 'मृत्युदंष्ट्रान्तिकं प्राप्तौ सर्वभूतानि मेनिरे |', seeing that no sooner they came, *Bhagadatta* hurled shower of arrows on both the *Krishnas*, injuring *Krishna* in the process 'तथा तु शरवर्षाणि पातयत्यनिशं प्रभो | गाजस्कन्धान्महाराज कृष्णयोः स्यन्दनस्थयोः || अथ कार्ष्णायसैर्बाणैः पूर्णमुक्तैः शितैः | अविध्यद्देवकीपुत्रं हेमपुङ्खैः शिलाशितैः || अग्निस्पर्शसमास्तीक्ष्णा भगदत्तेन चोदिताः | निर्भिद्य देवकीपुत्र क्षितिं जग्मुः सुवाससः ||'. Seeing this *Arjuna* intervenes and repels that attack, killing his famous elephant on which he was sitting. When *Bhagadatta*, deciding to kill *Arjuna* and *Krishna* continues to shower arrows on, charging his elephant towards them, *Krishna* deftly changes the course of the chariot, But *Krishna* is hurt, 'अविध्यद्देवकीपुत्रं हेमपुंखैः शिलाशितैः | अग्निस्पर्शसमास्तीर्णं भगदत्तेन चोदिताः | निर्भिद्य देवकीपुत्रं क्षितिं

जग्मुः सुवाससः ||' and *Arjuna's* crown is displaced from his head, 'तैर्जुनस्य समरे किरीटं परिवर्तितम्||'.

Finally addressing him to see the worlds for the last time, *Arjuna* shoot a powerful weapon on *Bhagadatta* who being infuriated issued a still more powerful and destructive *Vaishnava* weapon on *Arjuna* which *Krishna* receives himself on his chest whereupon the weapon becomes transformed as garland of fragrant flowers adorning his neck 'विद्धस्तेनाऽतिव्यथितो वैष्णवास्त्रमुदीरयन्| अभिमन्त्र्याङ्कुशं क्रुद्धो व्यसृजत्पाण्डवोरसि || विसृष्टं भगदत्तेन तदस्त्रं सर्वघाति वै | उरसा प्रतिजग्राह पार्थं संछाद्य केशवः || वैजयन्त्यभवन्माला तदस्त्रं केशवोरसि | पद्मकोशविचित्राढ्या सर्वर्तुकुसुमोत्कटा ||'. This does not satisfy the warrior in *Arjuna* who protests that Krishna had vowed that he would not participate in the war and act only as his charioteer. Why then did he not be true to his promise? If would have been in order if he was not standing on his feet and fighting, therefore it was not proper for him to receive the weapon on himself. *Krishna* assures him that while he holds his mighty bow in hand no one could defeat him 'ततोऽर्जुनः क्लान्तमनाः केशवं प्रत्यभाषत || अयुध्यमानस्तुरगान्संयन्तास्मीति चानघ | इत्युक्त्वा पुण्डरीकाक्ष प्रतिज्ञां स्वां न रक्षसि || यद्यहं व्यसनी वा स्यामशक्तो वा निवारणे | ततस्त्वेवं कार्यं स्यान्न तत्कार्यं मयि स्थिते || सबाणः सधनुश्चाहं ससुरासुरमानुषान्| शक्तो लोकानिमाञ्जेतुं तच्चापि विदितं तव ||'.

Then *Krishna* smilingly explains him the mystery behind his actions that while *Krishna-Consciousness* is unitary in *essence*, when it becomes manifest it acquires four forms; in the first form performing austerities, in the second, remaining as *Witness* of performance of noble deeds, in the third, as various *Krishna-forms* becoming the refuge initiates performance of actions and finally the fourth is that which dwells in the terrestrial waters eternally in equanimous sleep for period of innumerable years, till it rises up again to become potential and effulgent when *Time* becomes ripe for granting grace to those inclined to communion 'चतुर्मूर्तिरहं शश्वल्लोकत्राणार्थमुद्यतः | आत्मानं प्रविभज्येह लोकानां हितमादधे || एका मूर्तिस्तपश्चर्यां कुरुते मे भुवि स्थिता | अपरा पश्यति जगत् कुर्वाणं साध्वसाधुनी || अपरा कुरुते कर्म मानुषं लोकमाश्रिता | शेते चतुर्थी त्वपरा निद्रां वर्षसहस्रिकाम्|| यासौ वर्षसहस्रान्ते मूर्तिरुत्तिष्ठते मम | वरार्हेभ्यो वरान्श्रेष्ठांस्तस्मिन्काले ददाति सा ||'. He had parted the *Vaishnava* weapon to *Narakasura* as desired by *Mother Earth*, who in turn had given it to *Bhagadatta*. There is not one in the world who is indestructible by this weapon Therefore, for *Arjuna's* protection, he has this day neutralized it in a different way, so that *asuras* may not be able to misuse it again. Therefore, now that *Bhagadatta* is not possessed of that weapon, *Arjuna* should do not be afraid and kill him, even as he had killed *Narakasur* earlier 'तन्मया त्वत्कृते चैतदन्यथा व्यपनामितम्| विमुक्तं परमास्त्रेण जहि पार्थ महासुरम्|| वैरिणं जहि दुर्धर्षं भगदत्तं सुरद्विषम्| यथाहं जघिवान् पूर्वं हितार्थं नरकं तथा ||'. Thus directed, *Arjuna* kills *Bhagadatta* accordingly.

In many battles that follow, though *Kauravas* take many warriors as prisoners, *Duryodhana's* desire to take *Yudhishthira* captive remains unsuccessful. Therefore, devoid of any tact, he holds *Drona* responsible for the failure which he attributes to his affection for *Pandavas*, and his like for the *Kauravas*, lamenting that having promised him, a great person like him should not fail in fulfilling one's resolve 'नूनं वयं वध्यपक्षे भवतो द्विजसत्तम | यथा हि नागृहीः प्राप्तं समीपेऽद्य युधिष्ठिरम्||..वरं दत्त्वा मम प्रीतः पश्चाद्विकृतवानसि | आशाभङ्गं न कुर्वन्ति भक्तस्यार्याः कथंचन ||'. Listening to these unpleasant words, *Drona* reminds him that he had already cautioned him that supported by *Krishna, Arjuna* is not easy to be defeated even by gods, let alone by men. Therefore, he promises that some important person would surely be killed by on that day. 'ससुरासुरगन्धर्वाः सयक्षोरगराक्षसाः | नालं लोके रणे जेतुं पाल्यमानं किरीटिना || विश्वसृग्यत्र गोविन्दः पृतनानीस्तथार्जुनः | तत्र कस्य बलं क्रामेदन्यत्र त्र्यंबकात्प्रभो ः ||'.

Then *Drona* prepares a powerful formation difficult even for gods to breach, telling *Duryodhana* that on his side he should see that *Arjuna's* attention is diverted away form that place - 'सत्य तात वदाम्यद्य नैतज्जात्वन्यथा भवेत्| अद्यैकं प्रवरं कंचित्पातयिष्ये महारथम्|| न च व्यूहं विधास्यामि योऽभेद्यस्त्रिदशैरपि | योगेन केनचिद् राजन्नर्जुनस्त्वपनीयताम्||'. *Duryodhana* tells *Trigartas* to challenge *Arjuna* to fight, so that his attention would be diverted from the battle ground, while *Drona* would arrange the powerful circular battle formation, 'चक्रव्यूह' which no one among the *Pandavas* was capable of breaching except *Arjuna*, *Krishna*, and *Pradyumana*, *Aabhimanyu* *Arjuna's* son could penetrate and enter but knew not the manner of coming out of the चक्रव्यूह. Seeing the formation, *Yudhishthira* becomes concerned, afraid that *Arjuna* might hold him responsible if no fight is given in his absence. At that stage, *Abhimanyu* approaches him saying that he knows how to break the

ormation and is ready to take the responsibility, if others support him to come out since he does not know how. *Abhimanyu* had all the attributes of *Krishna* and *Arjuna* combined in him. *Yudhishthira's* valour, *Krishna's* noble character, performing deeds like *Bhima* and beauty, success and renown like *Arjuna*, humility like *Sahadeva* and appearance like *Nakula* - 'ये च कृष्णे गुणाः स्फीताः पाण्डवेषु च ये गुणाः | अभिमन्यौ किलैकस्था दृश्यन्ते गुणसंचयाः || युधिष्ठिरस्य वीर्येण कृष्णस्य चरितेन च | कर्मभिर्भीमसेनस्य सदृशो भीमकर्मणः || धनंजयस्य रूपेण विक्रमेण श्रुतेन च | विनयात्सहदेवस्य सदृशो नकुलस्य च ||'.

The चक्रव्यूह formation by *Drona* was manned by many warriors brave as *Indra* 'चक्रव्यूहो महाराज आचार्येणभिकल्पितः | तत्र शक्रोपमाः सर्वे राजानो विनिवेशिताः ||'. *Duryodhana* was surrounded by *Karna, Dushasana, and Kripa* and in the forefront was *Drona* himself, along with *Jayadratha* and *Ashvatthama*. In the rear were *Duryodhna's* brothers, *Shakuni, Shalya* and *Bhurishrava*. Seeing such strong formation *Yudhishthira* hesitatingly gives the responsibility to *Abhimanyu* since there were no one other, telling him that lest *Arjuna* despise them wanting valour, he should perform such brave deeds as would earn respect from him. Therefore, every one from his father's side and mother's side are requesting him to take up the responsibility, since he alone is qualified to fill their wishes 'वासुदेवादनवरं फाल्गुनाच्चामितौजसम्| अब्रवीत्परवीरघ्नमभिमन्युमिदं वचः || एत्य नो नार्जुनो गर्हेद्यथा तात तथा कुरु | चक्रव्यूहस्य न वयं विद्मो भेदं कथंचन || त्वं वार्जुनो वा कृष्णो वा भिन्द्यात्प्रद्युम्न एव वा | चक्रव्यूहं महाबाहो पञ्चमो नोपपद्यते || अभिमन्यो वरं तात याचतां दातुमर्हसि | पितृणां मातुलानां च सैन्यानां चैव सर्वशः || धनंजयो हि नस्तात गर्हयेदेत्य संयुगात्| क्षिप्रमस्त्रं समादाय द्रोणानीकं विशातय ||'.

Abhimanyu, though young yet bold for his age, agrees that even though he was taught how to breach the formation and not how to come out he will undertake the responsibility 'उपदिष्टो हि मे पित्रा योगोऽनीकविशातने | नोत्सहे हि निर्निर्गन्तुमहं कस्यांचिदापदि ||'. *Yudhishthira* enthuses him saying he will surely breach the formation and give them a powerful fight- 'भिन्ध्यनीकं युधां श्रेष्ठ द्वारं संजनयस्व नः | वयं त्वानुगमिष्यामो येन त्वां तात यास्यति || धनंजयसमं युद्धे त्वां वयं तात संयुगे | प्रणिधायानुयास्यामो रक्षन्तः सर्वतोमुखाः ||'. *Abhimanyu* proudly announces that entering *Drona's* battle formation like a butterfly in engulfing fire; he will perform a great deed, making his parents proud and bring great glory to the family. His action will please uncle *Krishna* and father *Arjuna* and world will witness how a mere child performed great deeds in battle. If he does not destroy the enemy, then he shall no more be fit to claim himself as *Arjuna's* son 'अहमेतत्प्रवेक्ष्यामि द्रोणानीकं दुरासदम्| पतङ्ग इव संक्रुद्धो ज्वलितं जातवेदसम्|| तत्कर्माद्य करिष्यामि हितं यद्वंशयोर्द्वयोः | मातुलस्य च यत्प्रीतिं करिष्यति पितुश्च मे || शिशुनैकेन संग्रामे काल्यमानानि संघशः | द्रक्ष्यन्ति सर्वभूतानि द्विषत्सैन्यानि वै मया || नाहं पार्थेन जातः स्यां न जातस्सुभद्रया यदि मे संयुगे कश्चिज्जीवितो नाद्य मुच्यते || यदि चैकरथेनाहं समग्रं क्षत्रमण्डलम्| न करोम्यष्टधा युद्धे न भवाम्यर्जुनात्मजः ||'.

Even as *Bhima*, *Drishtadhyumna*, *Satyaki* and others gather around him to give support *Abhimanyu* proceeds with his enormous responsibility, his charioteer tells him to take stock of the situation. *Drona* is a great warrior whereas he is still young, not skilled like him, 'आचार्यो हि कृती द्रोणः परमास्त्रे कृतश्रमः | अत्यन्तसुखसंवृद्धस्त्वं चायुद्धविशारदः ||'. But the young warrior with smile on his lips declares that even if all *Kshatriyas* and *Rudra* come before him, he is not frightened of him, nor as *Krishna's* nephew and *Arjuna's* son will he withdraw 'सारथे को न्वयं द्रोणः समग्रं क्षत्रमेव वा || ऐरावतगतं शक्रं सहामरगणैरहम्| अथवा रुद्रमीशानं सर्वभूतगणार्चितम्| योधयेयं रणमुखे न मे क्षत्रेऽद्य विस्मयः || न ममैतद्द्विषत्सैन्यं कलामर्हति षोडशीम्| अपि विश्वजितं विष्णुं मातुलं प्राप्य सूतज || पितरं चार्जुनं युद्धे न भीर्मामुपयास्यति ||'.

Soon a ferocious battle begins the warriors of both sides exhibiting great valour. Then in the very presence of *Drona, Abhimanyu* breaches the great battalion and entering undertakes great destruction of the enemy soldiers, spreading the bodies of the soldiers as if the sacred *kusha* grass is spread on the sacrificial altar 'शूराणां युध्यमानानां निघ्नतामितरेतरम्| संग्रामस्तुमुले राजन्प्रवर्तत्सुदारुणः || प्रवर्तमाने संग्रामे तस्मिन्नतिभयंकरे | द्रोणस्य मिषतो व्यूहं भित्त्वा प्राविशदार्जुनिः ||.. ते हन्यमाना विवशा नानालिङ्गैः शितैः शरैः | अभिपेतुः सुबहुशः शलभा इव पावकाः || ततस्तेषां शरीरैश्च शरीरावयवैश्च सः | सन्तस्तार क्षितिं क्षिप्रं कुशैर्वेदिमिवाध्वरे ||'. Seeing him fight courageously *Duryodhana* comes forward and challenges him, seeing which *Drona* tells others to accompany to give him protection. Thereafter they all shower many arrows and in that confusion bring *Duryodhana* to safety. *Abhimanayu* seems to be unconquerable seeing which *Drona* marvels approvingly the courage of young warrior breeching his

चक्रव्यूह formation, with every weapon acquired from *Krishna* and *Arjuna*, remarking to *Kripa* see *Arjuna* and *Subhadra's* son, an exceptional warrior, with no equals, fighting his way through the formation, 'एष गच्छति सौभद्रः पार्थानां प्रथितो युवा | नन्दयन्सुहृदः सर्वान् राजानं च युधिष्ठिरम्||..नास्य युद्धे समं मन्ये कंचिदन्यं धनुर्धरम्| इच्छन्हन्यादिमां सेनां किमर्थमपि नेच्छति ||'. These words of praise donor please *Duryodhana* who in the presence of *Karna* and others protests saying that *Drona* does not seem more eager to protect him as the son of his favorite disciple than kill him 'द्रोणस्य प्रीतिसंयुक्तं श्रुत्वा वाक्यं तवात्मजः | अर्जुनिं प्रति संक्रुद्धो द्रोणं दृष्ट्वा स्मयन्निव ||..सर्वमूर्धाभिषिक्तानामाचार्यो ब्रह्मवित्तमः | अर्जुनस्य सुतं मूढ नाय हन्तुमिहेच्छति ||..अर्जुनस्य सुतं त्वेष शिष्यस्त्वादभिरक्षति | शिष्याः पुत्राश्च दयितास्तदपत्यं च धर्मिणाम्|| संरक्ष्यमाणो द्रोणेन मन्यते वीर्यमात्मनः | आत्मसम्भावितो मूढस्तं प्रमथ्नीत मा चिरम्||'. Saying thus in *Drona's* very presence they all mount their charge on *Abhimanyu*.

Dushasana assures his brother he will soon kill the young warrior, hearing which without any doubts both *Arjuna* and *Krishna* will leave this world to go to *Death's* abode. That will make other *Panduvas* also to give up their life 'अहमेनं हनिष्यामि महाराज ब्रवीमि ते | ग्रसिष्याम्यद्य सौभद्रं यथा राहुर्दिवाकरम्|..श्रुत्वा कृष्णौ मया ग्रस्तं सौभद्रमतिमानिनौ | गमिष्यतः प्रेतलोकं जीवलोकान्न संशयः || तौ च श्रुत्वा मृतौ व्यक्तं पाण्डोः क्षेत्रोद्भवाः सुताः | एकाह्ना ससुहृद्वर्गाः क्लैब्याद्धास्यन्ति जीवितम्||'. *Karna* also takes upon himself to defeat him. Seeing them approach menacingly, *Abhimanyu* smilingly said that it is surely fated that he has to fight the two of them, who consider themselves great and brave warriors, belittling all others, 'दिष्ट्या पश्यामि संग्रामे मानिनं शूरमागतम्| निष्ठुरं त्यक्तधर्माणमक्रोशनपरायणम्||'. If they do not vacate the battle-field then they would certainly rue their decision, 'न हि मोक्ष्यसे जीवन्यदि नोत्सृजसे रणम्||'. *Abhimanyu* thereafter defeats both *Dushasana* and *Karna* and kills *Karna's* brother.

Soon seeing *Jayadratha* who was blessed by Shiva that he will able to stop *Panduva's* advancing in the battle, he will not defeat any of them. Therefore when *Arjuna* was away from them, *Jayadratha* becomes successful from coming to *Abhimanyu's* help, stopping them in their stride. In the battle that followed, many warriors on both sides are killed and amidst the confusion and dust of the battle, *Abhimanyu* shines like the mid-day Sun, fighting like *Indra* himself and also like *Kartikeya* in ancient times 'आददानं गजाश्वानां नृणां चायूंषि भारत | क्षणेन भूयः पश्यामः सूर्यं मध्यंदिने यथा || अभिमन्यु महाराज प्रपन्न द्विषदगणान्| स वासवसमः संख्ये वासवस्यात्मजात्मजः | अभिमन्युर्महाराज सैन्यमध्ये व्यरोचत || यथा पुरा वीरतमैः सुरसैन्येषु वैयथन्'. Seeing his extra-ordinary courage, even as *Kaurava* warriors find one by one of them are killed, they decided they should kill him instead. *Karna* asks *Drona* how could *Abhimanyu* be killed. But *Drona* impressed and pleased by his courage, asks *Karna* whether he can find any deficiency or any dark spot in his valour, even when his arrows create extreme pain to his body, he is pleased and proud. Indeed, there is be no difference between him and *Arjuna* 'अपि ह्यस्यान्तरं किंचित् कुमारस्याथ पश्यत | अण्वप्यस्यान्तरं ह्यद्य चरतः सर्वतोदिशम्||..आरुजन्नपि मे प्राणान्मोहयन्नपि सायकैः | प्रहर्षयति मा भूयः सौभद्रः परवीरहा | अपि मां नन्दयत्येष सौभद्रो विचरन्रणे || अन्तरं यस्य संरब्धा न पश्यन्ति महारथाः |..न विशेषं प्रपश्यामि रणे गाण्डीवधन्वनः ||'. Seeing the courage and brave deeds even *Karna* admits that he is standing on the battleground in spite of the intense pain by *Abhimanyu's* arrows, because departure would be against क्षत्रधर्म. 'अथ कर्णः पुनर्द्रोणमाहाभिमन्युशरार्दितः || स्थातव्यमिति तिष्ठामि पीड्यमानोऽभिमन्युना | तेजस्विनः कुमारस्य शराः परमदारुणाः ||'.

Hearing these words, *Drona* smilingly says, that this boy has indestructible armour, having imbibed that skill, which he imbibed from his father *Arjuna* who h had earlier imparted. Only arrows discharged with speed of mind can destroy his armour, his horses and his attendants. If possible *Karmu* should do this, only then can *Abhimanyu* be defeated, otherwise even gods would not be able - 'अभेद्यमस्य कवचं युवा चाशुपराक्रमः | उपदिष्टा मया चास्य पितुः कवचधारणा || नामेव निखिला वेत्ति ध्रुवं परपुरंजय | शक्यं त्वस्य धनुश्छेत्तुं ज्यां च बाणैः समाहितैः || अभीषूंश्च हयांश्चैव तथोभौ पार्ष्णिसारथी | एतत्कुरु महेष्वास राधेय यदि शक्यते || अथैनं विमुखीकृत्य पश्चात्प्रहरणं कुरु | सधनुष्को न शक्योऽयमपि जेतुं सुरासुरैः || विरथं विधनुष्कं च कुरुष्वैनं यदिच्छसि ||'.

As advised by *Drona*, *Karna* forthwith cuts *Abhimanyu's* bow, *Kritavarma* kills his horses and *Kripacharya* his two attendants. Thus robbed of all his weapons, *Abhimanyu* is then showered with arrows by the six *Kauravas* heroes 'शेषास्तु छिन्नधन्वानं शरवर्षैरवाकिरन्| त्वरमाणास्त्वराकाले विरथं षण्महारथाः || शरवर्षैरकरुणा बालमेकमवाकिरन्|'. Undaunted, *Abhimanyu* unsheathes his sword and fights but soon even that is broken by *Drona* while *Karna* destroys his shield 'स छिन्नधन्वा विरथः स्वधर्ममनुपालयन्| खड्गचर्मधरः श्रीमानुत्पपात विहायसा |.. तस्य द्रोणोऽच्छिनन्मुष्टौ खड्गं मणिमयत्सरुम || क्षुरप्रेण महातेजास्त्वरमाणः सपत्नजित्| राधेयो निशितैर्बाणैर्व्यधमच्चर्म चोत्तमम्||'. Then in an extra-

-dinary display of courage, brave *Abhimanyu* lifts one of the wheels of his chariot and spins it around ›pearing as if *Krishna* himself is spinning his draconian discus. *Abhimanyu's* body is shining on the attle ground with blood smeared on his clothes shining 'स चक्रेणूज्ज्वलशोभिनाङ्गो बभावतीवोज्ज्वलचक्रपाणिः | रणेऽभिमन्युः गमाम गेद. स वासुदेवानुकृतिं पकुर्वन्|| सुनरुधिरकृतैकरागवस्त्रो भृकुटिपुटाकुटिलोऽतिसिंहनादः || पभुरमितवलो रणेऽभिमन्युनृपवरमध्यगतो भृश व्यराजत्||'.

Abhimanyu is soon struck on head by *Dushasana* with his mighty mace, 'दौःशासननिरथोत्थाय कुरूणां र्तिवर्धन. || उत्तिष्टमान सौभद्रं गदया मूर्ध्न्यताडयत्|' even as other powerful warriors pounced on him like an elephant by ardcore hunters 'गदावेगेन महता व्यायामेन च मोहितः || विचेता न्यपतद्भूमौ सौभद्रः परवीरहा | एवं विनिहतो राजन्नेको वहुभिरहिवे ||'. *bhimanyu* lies dead on the battle field creating great havoc among *Pandavas* who shed tears even as ıey see the bravest of their offspring die. While *Kauaravas* rejoice his death, birds are seen swooning rom space screeching at the top of their voice, declaring that he was killed by *Drona*, *Karna* and others ı unrighteous manner 'आसीत्परमको हर्षस्तावकानां विशाम्पते | इतरेषां नु वीराणां नेत्रेभ्यः पापतज्जलम्|| अन्तरिक्षे च भूतानि पाक्रोशन्त विशाम्पते | प्ट्वा वीर च्युत चन्द्रमिवाम्बरात्|| द्रोणकर्णमुखैः षड्भिर्धार्तराष्ट्रैर्महारथैः | एकोऽय निहतः शेते नैप धर्मो मतो हि नः ||'. With his death the battle ield looked the sky sans the moon and the stars.

When *Yudhishthira* heard of the news, while Kauravas expressed happiness, he lamented that he young warrior surely died playing with his life, killing hundreds and thousands of enemy soldiers nd never showing diffidence. Surely he has gone this day to the heavenly world. A brave *Kshatariya* hat he was, having performed auspicious and righteous deed, does not deserve to be mourned 'स्वर्गमेप गतः ूरो यो हतो न पराङ्मुखः | संस्तम्भयत मा भैष्ट विजेष्यामो रणे रिपून् ||.. हत्वा दश सहस्राणि कौसल्यं च महारथम्| कृष्णार्जुनसमः कार्ष्णिः शक्रलोकं गतो धुवम्|| थाश्वनरमातङ्गान्विनिहत्य सहस्रशः | अवितृप्तः स संग्रामादशोच्यः पुण्यकर्मकृत्| गतः पुण्यकृतां लोकाञ्शाश्वतान्पुण्यनिर्जितान्||'.

Abhimanyus's death shatters *Pandavas* immensely. *Yudhishthira* blames himself for his death, wondering how will he face *Arjuna* and *Subhadra* when they do not see their son any more 'कथं द्रक्ष्यामि कौन्तेय सौभद्रं निहतेऽर्जुनम्| सुभद्रां वा महाभागां प्रियं पुत्रमपश्यतीम्||'. His desire for winning the battle, kingdom and personal glory, all evaporates and now that he is dead nothing seems agreeable, happiness neither here nor in heavens nor even complete deliverance 'अहमेव सुभद्रायाः केशवार्जुनयोरपि | पियाकामो जयाकांक्षी कृतवानिदमप्रियम्||..न मे जयः प्रीतिकरो न राज्यं न चामरत्वं न सुरैः सलोकता | इमं समीक्ष्यापतिवीर्यपौरुषं निपातितं देववरात्मजात्मजम्||'.

Seeing him mourning thus, *Vyasa* arrives to comfort him that *Abhimanyu* was brave and courageous, who having fought the battle has now departed to the heavenly worlds. All this was as ordained by the supreme god and no one can be saved form the divine intent and purpose. *Death* comes even to *Gandharvas* and Gods 'स्वर्गमेव गतः शूरः शत्रून्हत्वा वहून्रणे | अवालसदृशं कर्म कृत्वा वै पुरुपेत्तमः || अनतिक्रमणीयो वै विधिरेप युधिष्ठिर | देवदानवगन्धर्वान्मृत्युर्हरत भारत ||'.

Then observing the warriors though equally endowed by strength and perseverance killed and lying on ground, *Yudhishthira* reflects on *Death* and inquires *Vyaas* why they are now spoken as मृत, dead though once powerful and endowed with all noble attributes. *Death* comes when the time comes even to those who desire victory. Perhaps the word *dead* - मृत appears to be proper, seeing all the courageous warriors are lying here without any action or ego. Who cam be said to gave died and whose is the death and how does it come about ? - 'इमे वै पृथिवीपालाः शेते पृथिवीतले | निहताः पृतनामध्ये मृतसंज्ञा महावलाः || नागयुतवलाश्चन्ये वायुवेगवलास्तथा | न एते निहताः संख्ये तुल्यरूपा नरैर्नराः || नैपां पश्यामि हन्तारं पाणिनां संयुगे क्वचित्| विक्रमेणोपसम्पन्नास्तेपोवलसमन्विताः ||..मृता इति च शब्दोऽयं वर्तते च ततोऽर्थवत्| इमे मृता महीपालाः पायशो भीमविक्रमाः || निश्चेष्टा निरभीमानाः शूराः शत्रुवशंगताः | राजपुत्रांश्च संरब्धा वैश्वानरमुखं गताः || अत्र मे संशयः पाप्तः कुतः संज्ञा मृता इति | कस्य मृत्युः कुतो मृत्युः केन मृत्युरिमाः पजाः ||'.

Vyasa then narrates to him a legend. When *Prajapati* created worlds he did not provide for their destruction, consequently the creations became overcrowded. When he considered extermination of some of them, anger rose in him like *Agni* and began destroying the worlds. Seeing which *Rudra* approached him to be compassionate to those whom he had created and not destroy them, bound by past, present and future, instead withdraw within himself only the excess energy reposed in them. *Prajapati* assigns to मृत्यु, the task of withdrawing the excess. This task does not please मृत्यु and *Prajapati* consoles him saying that by such withdrawal only their distress will be removed by allowing only their body to be

destroyed. मृत्यु agrees to be only the regulator seizing only the body and not the soul, greed, anger, jealousy, hatred, deceit, obscurity, absence of shame, harsh words alone being responsible for the death of the creatures 'लोभः क्रोधोऽभ्यासूयेर्ष्या द्रोहो मोहश्च देहिनाम्|| अह्रिश्चान्योन्यपरुषा देहं भिन्द्युः पत्रथग्विधाः |'. Then assured that by their own action they will die and he will not be affected by any unrighteousness and further assured he engages in destroying creatures giving up desire and anger, making him an eternal torch-bearer of धर्म.' eliminating in that process the unrighteousness in the worlds 'ते मारयिष्यन्ति नगन्गतासून्नाधर्मस्ते भविता मा स्म भैषीः ||..सर्वेषां वै प्राणिनां कामरोषौ संत्यज्य त्वं संहरस्वेह जीवान्| एवं धर्मस्त्वां भविष्यत्यानन्तो मिथ्यावृत्तान्मारयिष्यत्यधर्मः || '.

This verily is death, which when it comes takes with it all the divinities presiding over the senses and bring them back again to this world. Thus having gone thus they come back living there in the intervening period. Even देवाs are subject to मृत्यु, therefore, Yudhishthira should not grieve for *Aabhimanyu* who at the moment is in the world of the brave, giving up all sufferings. This is the compensation given by Death, who having been provided by the Prajapati does its tasks a when the time comes. Creatures themselves are their own killers, not Death holding any rod. Therefore a wise one does not lament accepting death as divinely provided. *Abhimanayu* was son of the Moon, therefore, having killed warriors in a battle with courage and fortitude in this has gone back to his lunar world. Men of wisdom perform auspicious deeds desiring to go to heavens and not desire return to this world. 'सर्वेषां च प्राणिनां प्रायणान्ते तस्माच्छोकं मा कृथा निष्फलं त्वम्| सर्वे देवाः प्राणिभिः प्रायणान्ते गत्वा वृत्ताः संनिवृत्तास्तथैव | एवं सर्वे प्राणिनस्तत्र गत्वा वृत्ता देवा मर्त्य वद्राजसिंह ||...सर्वे देवा मर्त्यसंज्ञाविशिष्टास्तस्मात् पुत्रं मा शुचो राजसिंह | स्वर्गं प्राप्तो मोदते ते तनूजो नित्य रम्यान्वीरलोकानवाप्य ||... आत्मानं वै प्राणिनो घ्नन्ति सर्वे नैतान्मृत्युर्दण्डपाणिर्हिनस्ति | तस्मन्मृतान्नानुशोचन्ति धीराः मृत्यु ज्ञात्वा निश्चयं ब्रह्मसृष्टम्|..अभिमन्युः परान्हत्वा प्रमुखे सार्वधन्विनाम्| युध्यमानो महेष्वासो हतः सोऽभिमुखो रणे || असिना गदया शक्त्या धनुषा च महारथः | विरजाः सोमसूनुः सपुनस्तत्र पर्लीयसे ||'. Therefore, without further grief *Yudhishthira* should along with his brothers continue his struggle with courage.

When *Yudhishthira* and others were thus lamenting *Abhimanyu's* death, *Arjuna* himself was far away fighting the *Samshaptakas.* As he was returning to the camp after the battle, he expresses his uneasiness to *Krishna* saying that his heart and left arm are throbbing seeing many inauspicious omens, his speech becoming unsteady and body weak as if a great calamity is about to fall on *Yudhishthira* back on the battlefield 'किं नु मे हृदयं त्रस्तं वाक्च सज्जति केशव | स्पन्दन्ति चाप्यनिष्टानि गात्रं सीदति चाप्युत || अनिष्टं चैव मे श्लिष्टं हृदयान्नापसर्पति | भुवि ये दीक्षु चात्युग्रा उत्पातास्त्रासयन्ति माम्|| बहुप्रकारा दृश्यन्ते सर्व एवाघशंसिनः | अपि स्वस्ति भवेद्राज्ञः सामात्यस्य गुरोर्मम ||'. *Krishna* rejects any such possibility assuring him that he clearly sees only propitious events for *Yudhishthira* - 'व्यक्तं शिवं तव भ्रातुः सामात्यस्य भविष्यति | मा शुचः किंचिदेवान्यत्तत्रानिष्टं भविष्यति ||'. One is clueless here whether Krishna was assuring him on the basis of his divine insight or consoling as one human would console another. In any case *Arjuna* seems to have temporarily calmed, even as they proceed on their chariot talking about their battles- 'कथयन्तौ रणे वृत्तं प्रयातौ रथमास्थितौ ||.'

It is to be observed that *Vyasa* makes *Krishna* perform his temporal duties as a human being subordinating his *divine essence* only rarely and seldom bringing his *divine essence* to be displayed in extra-ordinary situations. When finally they reach their camp, an eerie silence meets them, with no one coming forward to receive them with joy, narrating the brave deeds done by them. *Arjuna* wonders becoming uneasy, seeing neither singers nor musical instruments played and especially not seeing his dear son *Abhimanyu* rushing to greet him, while people are seen sitting with their heads bowed - 'नन्दन्ति नाद्य तूर्याणि मङ्गल्यानि जनार्दन | मिश्रा दुन्दुभिनिर्घोषैः शङ्खाश्चाडम्बरैः सह || योधाश्चापि हि मा दृष्ट्वा निवर्तन्ते ह्यधोमुखाः || कर्माणि यथापूर्वं कृत्वा नाभिवादन्ति माम्|..मुखवर्णोऽप्रसन्नं वः सर्वेषामेव लक्ष्यते | न चाभिमन्युं पश्यामि न च मां प्रतिनन्दथ ||'. He had heard of *Drona's* चक्रव्यूह and that *Abhimanyu* had breached it. But concerned that since he was only instrucyed in breaching and entering but coming out of it, *Arjuna* desperately hopes that nothing could have happened to him. When he comes to know that that was actually what had happened, he becomes furious and demands to know who killed him 'सुभद्रायाः प्रियं पुत्रं द्रौपद्याः केशवस्य च | अम्बायाश्च प्रियं नित्यं कोऽवधीत्कालमोहितः || सदृशो वृष्णिवीरस्य केशवस्य महात्मनः | विक्रमश्रुतमाहात्म्यैः कथमायोधने हतः ||'. Lamenting that if he does not see him he will surely die, 'यदि पुत्रं न पश्यामि यास्यामि यमसादनम्||', he turns to *Krishna* demanding to know why did he keep this concealed from him and not

formed 'किमर्थमेतन्नाख्यातं त्वया कृष्ण रणे मम | अधाक्षं तानहं कूरस्तदा सर्वान्महारथान्||'.

No one dared to speak or offer consolation seeing *Arjuna's* anguish and anger. Only *Krishna* omes forward, conscious that *Arjuna* was reacting on temporal and empirical foundations and not on etaphysical or spiritual level, mourning the demise of his son's gross body and not the essence within. le console him saying that *Abhimanyu* had a death of a warrior, and death is sure for one who is born in is world - 'जातस्य हि धुवो मृत्युर्धुवं जन्म मृतस्य च |'. Hearing *Krishna's* words, *Arjuna* becomes calm and composed, alizing that his son was a blue-blooded *Kshatriya* bravely fought and died. But like any father, ondering how could his brothers and other warriors allowed him to die, he berates them that if they ould not have been able to save him then he would stayed back, remarking caustically whether their rmours and weapons were just show 'कथं च वः कृतास्त्राणां सर्वेषां शस्त्रपाणिनाम्| सौभद्रो निधनं गच्छेद् वज्रिणामपि समागतः || यद्येवमहमज्ञास्यमशक्तान्रक्षणे मम | पुत्रस्य पाण्डुपञ्चालान्मया गुप्तो भवेत्ततः || कथं च वो रथस्थानां शरवर्षाणि मुञ्चताम्| नीतोऽभिमन्युर्निधनं कदर्थीकृत्य वः परैः अहो वः पौरुषं नास्ति न च वोऽस्ति पराक्रमः | यत्राभिमन्युः समरे पश्यतां वो निपातितः || आत्मानमेव गर्हेयं यदहं वै सदुर्बलान्| युष्मानाज्ञाय निर्यातो भीरूनकृतनिश्चयान्|| अहोस्विद्भूषणार्थाय वर्म शस्त्रायुधानि वः | वचस्तु वक्तुं संसत्सु मम पुत्रमरक्षताम्||'.

When he gets up in anger no one could see him in his eyes, or speak a word excepting *Yudhishthira* and *Krishna*. *Yudhishthira* narrates the entire events as they transpired. *Jayadratha* stopped them from coming to his aid, allowing *Drona*, *Kripa*, *Karna*, *Asvathhama*, *Brihadvla* and *Kritaverma* to surround him allowing *Dushasana* to hit him on the head with his mace and kill him. Hearing these words *Arjuna* flares up on anger vowing to kill them all, if they do not surrender themselves forthwith to *Krishna* and *Yudhishthira*. His anger was diverted especially towards *Jayadratha* who, he declared would be killed ere the Sun sets on the following day, failing which he himself will enter fire and die himself. As if to make all known of this resolve *Arjuna* sounds his conch *Devadatt* and *Krishna* endorses that resolve blowing his own conch *Panchajany* 'सत्यं वः प्रतिजानामि श्वोऽस्मि हन्ता जयद्रथम्| न चेद्वधभयाद्भीतो धार्तराष्ट्रान्प्रहास्यति || न चास्माञ्शरणं गच्छेत्कृष्णं व पुरुषोत्तमम्| भवन्तं वा महाराज श्वोऽस्मि हन्ता जयद्रथम्||..रक्षमाणाश्च तं संख्ये ये मां योत्स्यन्ति केचन | अपि द्रोणकृपौ राजन्छादयिष्यामि तञ्छरैः || यद्येतदेवं संग्रामे न कुर्यां पुरुषर्षभाः | मा स्म पुण्यकृतां लोकान् प्राप्नुयां शूरसम्मतान्||..इमां चाप्यपरां भूयः प्रतिज्ञां मे निबोधत || यद्यस्मिन्नहते पापे सूर्योऽस्तमुपयास्यति | इहैव सम्प्रवेष्टाहं ज्वलितं जातवेदसम्||..अर्जुनेन प्रतिज्ञाते पाञ्चजन्यं जनार्दनः | प्रदध्मौ तत्र संक्रुद्धो देवदत्तं च फाल्गुनः ||'.

When *Jayadratha* heard *Arjuna's* vow, frightened at the prospect of being killed, he requested *Duryodhana* to return to his kingdom, saying that no one can save him from *Arjuna* supported by *Krishna* 'स निनीषति दुर्बुद्धिर्मां किलैकं यमक्षयम्| तत्स्वस्ति वोऽस्तु यास्यामि स्वगृहं जीवितेप्सया ||...पार्थेन प्रार्थितं वीरास्ते संदत्त ममाभयम्||..पाहर्षं पाण्डवेयानां श्रुत्वा मम महद्भयम्ऽ सीदन्ति मम गात्राणि मुमूर्षोरिव पार्थिवाः ||'. *Duryodhana* assures him that no one would dare to kill him in the midst of the *Kauravas* - 'न भेतव्यं नरव्याघ्र को हि त्वां पुरुषर्षभ | मध्ये क्षत्रियवीराणां तिष्ठन्त पार्थयेद्युधि ||'. *Drona*, *Karna*, *Shalya* and many others would guard him, besides he himself is great warrior, then why should he be frightened? *Drona* also assures him that he will fashion a formation of battalions which would be difficult even for *Arjuna* to breach. Thus assured, *Jayadratha* stays ready to fight again.

Here among *Pandavas*, once *Arjuna's* outburst dies down, *Krishna* mildly castigates him for taking a vow without even consulting his brothers, because if he fails then every one will have to face ridicule. With his announcement *Kauravas* have become conscious and guarded. *Jayadratha* is sure to be concealed by them from *Arjuna*, till the Sun sets on the following day 'भ्रातृणां मतमज्ञाय त्वया वाचा प्रतिश्रुतम्| सैन्धवं वास्मि हन्तेति तत्साहसमिदं कृतम्|| असम्मन्त्र्य मया सार्धमतिभारोऽयमुद्यतः | कथं नु सर्वलोकस्य नावहास्या भवेमहि ||..तेन शब्देन वित्रस्ता धार्तराष्ट्राः ससैन्धवाः | नाकस्मात्सिंहनादोऽयमिति मत्वा व्यवस्थिताः ||'. But *Arjuna* confident of his capability assures *Krishna* that no one can hope to live when he has powerful *Gandeeva* in his hand and *Hrishikesha* besides him. Therefore, his vow is as certain and immutable as dark spot on moon's face and power in ocean waves and even so know death to *Jayadratha*. As wisdom in *Brahmins*, humility in sages, wealth through sacrifice, success surely exists where *Narayana* is 'गाण्डीवं च धनुर्दिव्यं योद्धा चाहं नरर्षभ | त्वं च यन्ता हृषीकेश किं नु स्यादजितं मया || यथा लक्ष्म स्थिरं चन्द्रे समुद्रे च यथा जलम्| एवमेतां प्रतिज्ञां मे सत्यां विद्धि जनार्दन || तथाभियामि संग्रामं न जीयेयं जयामि च | तेन सत्येन संग्रामे हतं विद्धि जयद्रथम्|| ध्रुवं वै ब्राह्मणे सत्यं ध्रुवा साधुषु संनतिः | श्रीर्ध्रुवापि च यज्ञेषु ध्रुवो नारायणे जयः ||'.

Unsettled by sorrow and hurt both *Arjuna* and *Krishna* the night passed without any sleep seeing which even gods wondered what would happen now. Strange signs appeared in space, wind blew menacingly, lightening flashing and thunder roaring in the sky, even earth and mountains shaking. When *Arjuna* tells *Krishna* to go and console *Subhadra* and *Uttaara*, he goes to them with heavy heart Telling them not to be sad, since born in a noble family *Abhimanyu*, a *Kshatriya* has met death of a brave warrior, a son born to one who himself is brave. He has reached the supreme goal which even other would desire to attain. *Subhadra* should not grieve for *Arjuna's* vow will not go waste 'मा शोकं कुरु वार्ष्णेयि कुमारं पति सस्नुषा | सर्वेषां पाणिनां भीरु निष्ठेपा कालनिर्मिता || कुले जातस्य धीरस्य क्षत्रियस्य विशेषतः | सदृशं मरण ह्येतत्तव पुत्रस्य मा शुचः || दिष्ट्या महारथ धीरः पितुस्तुल्यपराक्रमः | क्षात्रेण विधिना पाप्तो वीराभिलषितां गतीम्|| .. वीरसूर्वीरपत्नी त्वं वीरजा वीरवान्धवा | मा शुचस्तनयं भद्रे गतः स परमां गतिम्|| . श्वः शिरः श्रोप्यसे तस्य सैन्धवस्य रणे हतम्| समस्तपञ्चाकादवाप्यां विशोका भव मा रुदः ||..यत्पार्थेन प्रतिज्ञात ततथा न तदन्यथा | चिकीर्षितं हि ते भर्तु भवेज्जातु निष्फलम्||..सुभद्रे मा शुचः पुत्रं पाञ्चाल्याश्वासयोत्तराम्| गतोऽभिमन्युः प्रथिता गति क्षत्रियपुङ्गवः || ये चान्याऽपि कुले सन्ति पुरुषा नो वरानने | सर्वे ते तां गतिं यान्तु ह्यभिमन्योर्यशस्विनः ||'.

That night was sleepless for *Krishna*, his love for *Arjuna* making him decide to participate in the battle himself, lest he may put end to his life if his vow to kill *Jayadratha* before the Sun sets fails. Therefore, he asks *Daruaka*, his charioteer to bring his divine weapons so that he may embark on the battle that very day, saying that only one person, *Indra* is capable of killing *Jayadratha*, but at this moment being protected by *Drona* even that is not possible. Therefore, he himself will take up the task to kill him and there is no other task more dearly for him that putting an end to *Arjuna's* miseries. Let the three worlds see his valor when they see him hill all. - 'योगमास्थाय युक्तात्मा सर्वेषामीश्वरेश्वरः | श्रेयस्कामः पृथुयशा विष्णुर्जिष्णुप्रियंकरः ||.. सोऽहं श्वस्तत्करिष्यामि यथा कुन्तीसुतोऽर्जुनः || अप्राप्तेऽस्त दिनकरे हनिष्यति जयद्रथम्| न हि दारा न मित्राणि ज्ञातयो न च बान्धवाः || कश्चिदन्यः प्रियतरः कुन्तीपुत्रात्ममार्जुनात्| अनर्जुनमिम लोकं मुहूर्तमपि दारुक || उदीक्षितुं न शक्तोऽहं भविता न च ततथा | अहं विजीत्य तान्सर्वान्सहासा महर्द्विपान्|| अर्जुनार्थे हनिष्यामि सकर्णान्ससुयोधनान्| श्वो निरीक्ष्यन्तु मे वीनण त्रयो लोका महाहवे || धनजयार्थे समरे पराक्रान्तस्य दारुक |..श्वः सदेवाः सगन्धर्वाः पिशाचोरगराक्षसाः || ज्ञास्यन्ति लोकाः सर्वे मां सुहृद सव्यसाचिनः | यस्त द्वेष्टि स मा द्वेष्टि यस्त चानु स मामनु || इति सकल्पयता बुद्धया शरीरार्द्धं ममार्जुनः |..गदा कौमोदकीं दिव्यां शक्तिं चक्रं धनुः शरान्|| आरोप्य वै रथे सूत सर्वोपकरणानि च | स्थान च कल्पयित्वाथ रथोपस्थे ध्वजस्य मे || वैनतेयस्य वीरस्य समरे रथशोभिनः |..एकास्त्वहमनर्थं च सर्वदुःखानि चैव ह || भ्रातुः पैतृष्वसेयस्य व्यपनेष्याम दारुक |'.

Hearing about these words spoken and arrangements made by *Krishna*, fear creeps in *Dhritarashtra's* heart. He remembers all the efforts made by him to arrive at a settlement with *Pandavas* which *Duryodhana* foolishly and summarily rejected. *Sanjaya* says it is no use mourning now; what is the use to construct a bridge when the waters have already flowed down 'गतोदके सेतुबन्धो यादृक्तादृगय तव | विलापो निश्फलो राजन्मा शुचो भरतर्षभ ||'.

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Chapter - X

The next day, *Drona* assembled the *Kaurava's* army for continuing the war. When the warriors ·sembled on the filed, they arrogantly call *Pandavas* to come forth and fight saying, 'कार्जुनः क्व स गोविन्दः क्व मानी वृकोदरः | क्व च ते सुहृदस्तेषामास्वयन्ने रणे तदा ||'. Thereafter *Drona* conceals *Jayadratha* in such a place which :cording to his assessment would be safe even from gods, then what to speak of *Pandavas* 'तत्रस्थं त्वां न ाद्रुं शक्ता देवाः सवासवाः | किं पुनः पाण्डवाः सर्वे समाश्वसिहि सैन्धव ||'. *Arjuna* then arrive son the battle field with *Krishna* ınouncing his arrival sounding his conch.

In the beginning, *Dushasana* challenges *Arjuna* but is repelled. Thereafter even as *Arjuna* goes ı search of *Jayadratha* he sees *Drona* in front of him. He bows down in respect saying that he is like ıther to him comparable to *Yudhishthira*. Therefore even as he is refuge to *Ashvatthama* he should :main his refuge and asks his permission to begin the battle to fulfill his vow - 'शिवेन ध्याहि मां ब्रह्मन्स्वस्ति चैव स्व मे | भवत्प्रसादादिच्छामि प्रवेष्टुं दुर्भिदां चमूम्|| भवान्पितृसमो मह्यं धर्मराजसमोऽपि च | तथा कृष्णसमश्चैव सत्यमेतद्ब्रवीमि ते || अश्वत्थामा यथा तात ·णीयस्त्वयानघ | तथाहमपि ते रक्ष्यः सदैव द्विजसत्तम || तव प्रसादादिच्छेयं सिन्धुराजानमाहवे | निहन्तु द्विपदां श्रेष्ठ प्रतिज्ञां रक्ष मे प्रभो ||. *Drona* replies ıat he would not succeed unless he is defeated first, 'मामजित्वा न बीभत्सो शक्यो जेतुं जयद्रथः ||', saying thus he milingly threw a shower of arrows on *Arjuna* which was returned with equal force concealing the entire pace with his arrows, even as clouds would hide Sun's rays 'ततोऽर्जुनः शरव्रातान् द्रोणस्यावार्य सायकैः | द्रोणमभ्यद्रवद्बाणैर्घो ·पैर्महत्तरैः ||'. *Drona* was please at the display and encourages *Arjuna* further to how his skill 'विशयिष्यञ्शिष्यं च ·णो राजन्पराक्रमी | अदृश्यमर्जुनं चक्रे निमेषाच्छरवृष्टिभिः ||'. Then *Krishna* seeing *Arjuna* waste in fruitless display and orgetting his main objective, tells him not play games with *Drona* but proceed further to fulfill his goal ·तोऽब्रवीद्वासुदेवो धनंजयमिदं वचः | पार्थ पार्थ महाबाहो न नः कालात्ययो भवेत्|| द्रोणमुत्सृज्य गच्छामः कृत्यमेतन्महत्तरम्|'. *Arjuna* agrees and eaves *Drona* after offering obeisance to him, even as *Drona* thinking that his favrorite pupil is deserting he field shouts at him why he is deserting the filed saying that it is not proper to leave without defeating ·ne's enemy 'ततोऽब्रवीत् स्वयं द्रोणः क्वेदं पाण्डव गम्यते | ननु नाम रणे शत्रुमजित्वा न निवर्तसे ||'. Seeing his concern and affection owards him, *Arjuna* replies him that a teacher can never be his enemy; himself being his disciple and as ·ood as a son. He assures him then there is no one in the whole world who could defeat him 'गुरुर्भवान्न मे शत्रुः ·िष्यः पुत्रसमोऽस्मि ते | न चास्ति स पुमाँल्लोके यस्त्वां युधि पराजयेत्||'. Assuring thus he goes on search of *Jayadratha.*

A great battle commences between *Kauravas* and *Arjuna,* who with his furious looks being ıggrieved by the death of his son, was looking like *Death* personified 'पुत्रशोकाभिसंतप्तं क्रुद्धं मृत्युमिवान्तकम्| त्यजन्तं ·ुले प्राणान्संनद्धं चित्रयोधिनम्||'. *Kritavarma,* the *Bhoja* prince fighting on *Duryodhana's side,* teasingly shoots ırrows aimed at *Krishna,* seeing which *Krishna* tells *Arjuna* not to be kind to *Kritavarma* because he is a *Bhoja* prince 'भोजस्तु प्रहसन्पार्थं वासुदेवं च माधवम्| एकैकं पञ्चविंशत्या सायकानां समार्पयत्||...ततः कृष्णोऽब्रवीत्पार्थं कृतवर्मणि मा दयाम्| कुरु ·म्बन्धकं हत्वा प्रमथ्यैनं विशातय ||', whereupon *Arjuna* shoots an arrow and makes *Kritavarma* unconscious before eaving the fielded to fight a fierce battle with *Shrutayudha*, who gets down from the chariot with his nighty mace given by *Varuna* to his father, without realizing that his father was invincible in war so long ıs he does not use it against any one who was not engaged in the war. Overlooking this restraint, when *Shrutayudha* hits *Krishna* with that mace, it rebounds on *Shrutayudha* him and kills him 'न चाकरोत्स तद्वाक्यं ·ाप्ते काले श्रुतायुधः | स तया वीरघातिन्या जनार्दनमताडयत्|| प्रतिजग्राह तां कृष्णः पीनेनांसेन वीर्यवान्| नाकम्पयत शौरिं स विन्ध्यं गिरिमिवानिलः || प्रत्युद्यान्ति ·मेवैया कृत्येव दुरधिष्ठिता | जघान चास्थितं वीरं श्रुतायुधममर्षणम्||'.

Krishna's presence with *Arjuna* was so galling for the *Kaurava* warriors that in their anxiety and desperation to keep them away from *Jayadratha* they use every ruse to deflect his attention, taking every opportunity and every occasion to inflict arrows on *Krishna* along with *Arjuna*, as *Sanjaya* repeatedly points out to *Dhritarashtra.* Soon *Shrutayu* and *Achyutayu*, *Shrutayudha's* brothers both

attack them both in which *Krishna* becomes unconscious shot by an arrow, even *Arjuna* needing support of the flag staff. At that moment soldiers felt that he may have dies and started fleeing from the battle filed. Seeing Arjuna losing consciousness, Krishna became exceedingly angry and started comforting him with sweet words 'सोऽतिविद्धो बलवता शत्रुणा शत्रुकर्शनः | जगाम परमं मोहं मोहयन्केशवं रणे || क्षते क्षारं स हि ददौ पाण्डवस्य महात्मनः | पार्थोऽपि भृशसंविद्धो ध्वजयष्टिं समाश्रितः || कृष्णश्च भृशसंतप्तो दृष्ट्वा पार्थं विचेतनम्| अश्वासयत्सुहृद्यो भिर्वाग्भिस्तत्र धनंजयम्||'. *Shrutayu* continues to shower arrows making both *Arjuna* and *Krishna*, obscured from sight, 'अदृश्यं चक्रतुर्युद्धे तदद्भुतमिवाभवत्|'. Not seeing them, they assume that they are killed; *Shrutayu* and *Achyutayu* begin blowing their conches. But *Arjuna* soon composing himself from the stupor, charges on them and finally kills him. When *Arjuna* breaching the *Kaurava* army, *Ambashtha* blocks his way and *hits Krishna* with his mace, seeing which a *Arjuna* becomes furious and kills him, 'अंबष्ठस्तु गदां गृह्य कोपपर्याकुलेक्षणः || आससाद रणे पार्थं केशवं च महारथम्| ततः सम्प्रहरन्वीरो गदामुद्यम्य भारत || रथमावार्य गदया केशवं समताडयत्| गदया ताडितं दृष्ट्वा केशवं परवीरहा || अर्जुनोऽथ भृशं क्रुद्धः सोऽम्बष्ठं प्रति भारत |..तस्यार्जुनः क्षुरप्राभ्यां सगदावुद्यतौ भुजौ || चिच्छेदेन्द्रध्वजाकारौ शिरश्चान्येन पत्रिणा ||'.

Seeing the mass destruction on their side and the soldiers worried and frightened seeing *Arjuna* breach his battle-formation, *Duryodhana* requests *Drona* since he is their sole source of power, to increase his assault so that *Arjuna* could be killed, without being compromised by his love for *Arjuna*. But he is confused, in spite of having made all arrangements as would please him'जानामि त्वां महाभाग पाण्डवानां हिते रतम्| तथा मुह्यामि च ब्रह्मन्कार्यवत्तां विचिन्तयन्|| यथाशक्ति च ते ब्रह्मन्वर्तये वृत्तिमुत्तमाम्| प्रीणामि च यथाशक्ति तच्च त्वं नावबुध्यसे ||'. *Duryodhana* protests if the teacher had not promised to keep *Arjuna* away from *Jayadratha*, he would have advised his hapless brother-in-law to go back to *Sindhudesha*. But the fool having believed his words has placed himself at death's door, which only proves that a person may be saved from death but not from *Arjuna's* arrows. Therefore *Acharya* without being angry with him, should do every thing that would save *Jayadratha* 'नादास्यच्चेद्वरं मह्यं भवान्पाण्डवनिग्रहे | नावारयिष्यं गच्छन्तमहं सिन्धुपतिं गृहान्|| मया त्वाशंसमानेन त्वत्तस्त्राणमबुद्धिना | आश्वासितः सिन्धुपतिर्मोहाद्दत्तश्च मृत्यवे ||..स तथा कुरु शोणाश्च यथा मुच्येत सैन्धवः | मम चार्तप्रलापानां मा क्रुधः पाहि सैन्धवम्||.

Knowing *Duryodhana's* impetuous nature, *Drona* tells him without any trace of anger that he is not hurt by his words, because he is like his own son *Ashvatthama*. Nevertheless, he should realize that *Krishna* is skilled charioteer, steering his chariot faster for any arrows being hit while he himself is old and cannot direct his chariot as swiftly as *Krishna* can. He agrees that he has taken a vow to capture *Yudhishthira* and bring him, but not when *Arjuna* is around to protect him. Then he pointedly reminds *Duryodhana* that he too is equal in skill as *Pandavas*, then why should he not take this opportunity to enter the fray and grab *Yudhishthira* - 'नाभ्यसूयामि ते वाक्यमश्वत्थाम्नासि मे समः | सत्यं तु ते प्रवक्ष्यामि तज्जुषस्व विशाम्पते || सारथिः प्रवरः कृष्णः शीघ्राश्चास्य हयोत्तमाः | अल्पं च विवरं कृत्वा तूर्णं याति धनंजयः || किं न पश्यसि बाणौघान्क्रोशमात्रे किरीटिनः | पश्चाद्रथस्य पतितान् क्षिप्ताञ्शीघ्रं हि गच्छतः || न चाहं शीघ्रयानेऽद्य समर्थो वयसान्वितः | सेनामुखे च पार्थानामेतद्बलमुपस्थितम्|| ..तुल्याभिजनकर्माणं शत्रुनिकं सहायवान्| गत्वा योधय मा भैस्त्वं त्वं ह्यस्य जगतः पतिः || राज शूरः कृती दक्षो वैरमुत्पाद्य पाण्डवैः | वीर स्वयं प्रयाह्यत्र यत्र पार्थो धनंजयः ||'.

Duryodhana sheepishly acknowledges that when *Drona* is not able to stop *Arjuna*, how can he expect him to subdue him? It is easier to subdue *Indra* than *Arjuna*. If *Acharya* thinks that he should venture, then he would surely obey and enter the battle accordingly 'कथं त्वामप्यतिक्रान्तः सर्वशस्त्रभृतां वरम्| धनंजयो मया शक्य आचार्य प्रतिबाधितुम्|| अपि शक्यो रणे जेतुं वज्रहस्तः पुरंदरः | नार्जुनः समरे शक्यो जेतुं परपुरंजयः ||..क्षमं च मन्यसे युद्धं मम तेनाद्य सयुगे | परवानस्मि भवति प्रेष्यवद् रक्ष मद्यशः ||'. *Drona* agrees with what *Duryodhana* says about *Arjuna* being difficult to be defeated. Therefore, but he promises to bequeath an armour to him by which not even a single arrow from *Arjuna* would harm him, he himself performing such deeds as would enable him to restrain *Arjuna's* advance - 'सत्यं वदसि कौरव्य दुराधर्षो धनंजयः | अहं तु तत्करिष्यामि यथैनं प्रसहिष्यसि || अद्भुतं चाद्य पश्यन्तु लोके सर्वधनुर्धराः | विषक्तं त्वयि कौन्तेय वासुदेवस्य पश्यतः || एष ते कवचं राजंस्तथा बध्नामि काञ्चनम्| यथा न बाणा नास्त्राणि प्रहरिष्यन्ति ते रणे ||..न कृष्णो न च कौन्तेयो न चान्यः शस्त्रभृद्रणे | शरानर्पयितुं कश्चित्कवचे तव शक्ष्यति ||'. Then reciting a मन्त्र as was given by *Angira* to *Brihaspati*, *Drona* blesses him for success with power and grace of gods and the elements of quarters 'करोतु स्वस्ति ते ब्रह्म ब्रह्मा चापि द्विजातयः | सरीसृपाश्च ये श्रेष्ठास्तेभ्यस्ते स्वस्ति भारत || ब्रह्मसूत्रेण बध्नामि कवचं तव भारत | हिरण्यगर्भेण यथा बद्धं विष्णोः पुरा रणे || यथा च ब्रह्मणा बद्धं संग्रामे तारकामये | शक्रस्य कवचं दिव्यं तथा बध्नाम्यहं तव || बद्ध्वा तु कवचं तस्य मन्त्रेण विधिपूर्वकम्| प्रेषयामास राजानं युद्धाय महते द्विज ||'. Significantly *Vyasa* compares this

equest to the one granted in earlier case by *Vishnu* to *Vrittra*, the demon, which had made the gods ifficult making them approach *Vishnu* for succor, whereupon *Indra* is endowed with luminous energy.

On entering the battle field, *Duryodhana* observes *Arjuna* and *Krishna* along with *Somakas* ghting with *Drona*, a sight wonderful at the same time terrifying, one like which earlier was not seen r heard - 'नद्युद्धमभवत्तीव्रं तुमुलं लोमहर्षणम्| कुरूणां पान्डवानां च व्युहस्य पुरातोऽद्भुतम्|| राजन्कदाचिन्नास्माभिर्दृष्टं तादृङ् न च श्रुतम्| यादृङ्मध्यगतो युद्धमासीर्दविशाम्पते ||'. *Drona* repulses the attack which was like a huge wave in the ocean frightening and spersing *Pandava's* soldiers, 'समुद्रमिव धर्माम्ते विशन्घोरो महानिलः | व्यक्षोभयदनीकानि पाण्डावानां द्विजोत्तमः ||', though andavas and *Somakas* regrouped and destroyed *Kaurava* army like a forest warden killing cruel nimals 'धार्तराष्ट्रस्तथाभूता वध्यन्ते पाण्डुसृञ्जयैः | अगोपाः पशवोऽरण्ये बहुभिः श्वापदैरिव ||'.

Even as *Ashvatthama* and *Karna* escorting *Jayadratha*, *Drishtadhyumna* arrives on the battle eld to face *Drona* whereupon a great battle ensues 'किरन्नु शरवर्षाणि रोचमान इवांशुमान्| धृष्टद्युम्नो महाराज द्रोणमभ्यद्रवद् रणे ||', ut finds himself surrounded by *Drona* 'सिंहनेव मृगं ग्रस्तं नरसिंहेन मारिष | द्रोणेन मोचयामास पाञ्चाल्यं शिनिपुङ्गवः ||', He is soon reed by *Satyaki* and even as *Pandavas* engage *Drona* and *Kauravas* in a fierce battle, the Sun is seen aversing slowly towards the western horizon, with the dust of the battle ground concealing its rays. rjuna returns on the field, *Krishna* fending his way through *Kaurava's* soldiers with his fast trotting orses like *Garuda*, which even *Surya*, *Indra*, *Rudra*, or *Kuber* could not have overtaken 'तथा तेषु विषक्तेषु न्येषु जयगृद्धिषु | अर्जुनो वासुदेवश्च सैन्धवायैव जग्मतुः || रथमार्गप्रमाणं तु कौन्तपयो निशितैः शरैः | चकार यत्र पन्थानं ययौ येन जनार्दनः ||..तार्क्ष्य तुरगोत्तमैर्वाजिभिः साधुवाहिभिः | तदागच्छद्धृषीकेशः कृत्स्नं विस्मापयञ्जगत्|| न तथा गच्छति रथस्पानस्य विशाम्पते | नेन्द्रस्य न तु रुद्रस्य नापि वैश्रवणस्य च ||'. irst *Arjuna* is confronted by two princes of *Avanti* who injure both *Arjuna* and *Krishna*. When one of he brothers is killed the other one hits *Krishna* on his forehead with his mace but that does not shake *adava* 'गदया रथिनां श्रेष्ठो नृत्यन्निव महारथः || अनुविन्दस्तु गदया ललाटे मधुसूदनम्| स्पृष्टा नाकम्पयत्कुद्धो मेनाकमिव पर्वतम्||'.

Meanwhile *Krishna* observes that his horses are tired, whereupon *Arjuna* conceals them with rrows and pierces earth with another arrow creating a lake, good enough for drinking 'परीप्सन्ते जलं चेमे पेयं न त्ववगाहनम्'. *Krishna* smiles approvingly saying well-done, 'ततः पहस्य गोविन्दः साधु सध्वित्यथाब्रवीत्'. The horses drink vater and become refreshed. *Kaurava's* soldiers completely oblivious of *Krishna* tending the horses nd *Arjuna* resting nearby, foolishly conclude that either they are dead or have deserted the battle, while ome others discount any such possibility, asking soldiers to follow them 'विनिःश्वसन्तस्ते गजन्भग्नदंष्ट्र इवोरगाः | धिगहो धिग्गतः पार्थः कृष्णश्चेत्यब्रुवन्पृथक्|| त्वत्सेनाः सर्वतो दृष्ट्वा लोमहर्षणमद्भुतम्| त्वरध्वमिति चाक्रन्दन्नैतदस्तीति चाब्रुवन्||'. Even as such contradictory opinions are voiced, *Arjuna* continues his search of *Jayadratha*.

Many battles are thereafter fought between *Pandavas* and *Kauravas*, victory and defeat becoming only a matter of record, *Dhritarashtra* worrying all the time the danger to *Kauaravas* in the form of *Bhima* 'न हि पश्याम्यहं तं वै त्रिषु लोकेषु कंचन | कद्धस्य भीमसेनस्य यस्तिष्ठेदग्रतो रणे ||'. In fact he worries him more than even *Arjuna, Krishna, Satyaki* or *Drishtadhyumna* 'म मेऽर्जुनादभयं तादृक्कृष्णान्नापि च सात्वनात्| हुतभुग्जन्मनो नैव तादृग्भीमादभयं मम ||'. In the encounters between *Bhima* with *Karna, Bhima* had an upper hand and thrown out of his chariot he had to take shelter in *Vrishasena's* chariot, hearing which *Yudhsishthira* became exceedingly pleased 'हताश्वात्तु रथात्कर्णः समाप्लुप्य विशाम्पते | स्यन्दनं वृषसेनस्या तूर्णमापाप्लुवे भयात्|| तस्य तं निनादं श्रुत्वा प्रहृष्टोऽभूद्युधिष्ठिरः | कर्णं पराजितं मत्वा भीमसेनेन संयुगे ||'. Seeing *Karna* in trouble, *Duryodhana* asks *Dushala* to go for his help. But even as *Karna* takes shelter in his chariot, *Bhima* kills *Dushala's* severing his head. Seeing him dead, *Duryodhana* goes post haste to *Drona* with his eyes red, and tells him that *Arjuna, Satyaki* and *Bhima* are fast approaching *Jayadratha*. He protests that he understand *Drona's* affection for *Arjuna* but why should be protect *Satyaki* and *Bhima* in the same manner. Then with obvious sarcasm in his voice he informs *Drona* that people are wondering how is it that *Drona* an able warrior and skilled in arms seems to have been defeated by *Pandavas*, blaming every thing on his ill-luck - 'आश्चर्यभूतः लोकेऽस्मिन्समुद्रस्येव शोषणम्| निजाoयस्तव विपाएय सात्वतेनानुर्जुनेन च || तथैव भीमसेनेन लोकः संशदते भृशम्| कथं द्रोणो जितः संख्ये धनुर्वेदस्य पारगः | इत्येव बुवते योधा अश्रद्धेयमिदं तव || नाश एन तु मे मन्दभाग्यस्य संयुगे | यत्र त्वां पुरुषव्याघ्रं व्रतिकान्तास्त्रयो रथाः ||'

Listening to these words *Drona* tells him there is much to speak on this matter. He reminds him

that with *Arjuna* and *Krishna* on one side it would be difficult to protect *Jayadratha* who is like a pawn in the game of dice which *Shakuni* initiated and which is being played on this battle field again, with arrows as the gambler's sticks. Therefore they should all protect *Jayadratha* on which aloe the success and defeat depends 'चिन्त्या वाहुविधं तात यत्कृत्यं तच्छृणुष्व मे | ..तद्गेगीयस्तरं मन्ये यत्र कृष्णधनंजयौ || म्पाप्तं तदिदं द्यूतं यत् तच्छकुनिर्बुद्धिजम् - सभायां जयो वृत्तो नापि तत्र पराजयः || इह नो ग्लहमानानामद्य तावज्जयजयौ |. . यत्र ते वहवस्तान कौरवेया व्यवथिनाः || सेनां दुरोदरं विद्धि शगनक्षान्विशाम्पते ग्लहं च सैन्धवं राजंस्तत्र द्यूतस्य निश्चयः || . . . सैन्धवस्य रणे रक्षां विधिवत्कर्तुमर्हथ | तत्र नो ग्लाहमानानां ध्रुवौ जयपराजयौ ||'.

The battle between *Karna* and *Bhima* did not end there. Observing that *Bhima* leaving him is going to the place where *Krishna* and *Arjuna* were stationed, he started showering arrows on him calling on him that he had never expected him to desert the filed without fighting him to the finish, which does not surely bring glory to one born to *Kunti* - 'भीमसेनम्तु गाधेयमुत्सृज्य रथिनां वरम्| इयेष गन्तुं यत्राम्नाां वीरौ कृष्णधनंजयौ || न प्रयान्तमभिदुमस्य राधेयः कङ्कपत्रिभिः | अभ्यवर्षन्महाराज मेघो वृष्ट्येव पर्वतम्|| ...भीमाहितैस्तव रणे स्वप्नेऽपि न विभावितम्| तद्दर्शयसि कस्मान्मे पार्थ दिदृक्षया || कुन्त्याः पुत्रस्य सदृशं नेदं पाण्डवनन्दन |'.

But the battle between *Bhima* and *Karna* does not end there. After a great battle finally *Karna* has to face defeat in *Bhima's* hands and he has to taken shelter in another chariot having made to dismount from his own 'स वैक्लवं महत्प्राप्य छिन्नधन्वा शराहतः | तथा पुषमानी स प्रत्यपायाद्रथान्तरम्|| स्वयं शिष्यो महेशस्य भृहत्तमधनुर्धरः शिष्यत्वं प्राप्तवान्कर्णस्तव तुल्योऽस्त्रविद्यया || तद्विशिष्टोऽपि वा कर्णः शिष्यः शिष्यगुणैर्युतः | कुन्तिपुत्रेण भीमेन निर्जितः मन्लीलया ||'. But this did not end *Karna* coming again with renewed energy, both fighting with anger, even as *Bhima* remembering all the indignities which they had to suffer pounced upon him, showering innumerable arrows which *Karna* brushed aside with a smile as it were, even as the gathered soldiers started trembling at the vehement battle 'क्रोधरक्तेक्षणौ तीव्रौ निश्वसन्ताविवोरगौ | शुरावन्योन्यमासाद्य ततक्षतुररिंदमौ || व्याघ्राविव सुसंरब्धौ श्येनाविव च शीघ्रगौ | शरभाविव संकुद्धो युयुधते परस्परम्||...ततः प्रहस्याधिरथिस्तूर्णमस्य शिलाशितैः | व्यधमद्भीमसेनस्य शरजालानि पत्रिभिः ||. . . संरब्धौ क्रोधाताम्राक्षौ प्रेक्ष्य कर्णवृकोदरौ | संत्रस्ताः समकम्पत त्वदीयानां महारथाः ||'.

The battle between *Karna* and *Bhima* was so terrifying that *Dhritarashtra* worries about the outcome blaming every thing on the working of divine will. *Duryodhana* was always bragging that *Karna* would definitely win over *Arjuna* together with *Krishna*. And even *Karna* being proud of his own strength has been fighting with *Bhima*. But he does not seem to find success 'दैवमेव परं मन्ये धिक्पौरुषमनर्थकम्| यत्राधिरथिरायत्तो नातरत्पाण्डवं रणे || इति दुर्योधनस्याहमश्रौषं जल्पतो मुहुः | कर्णो हि बलवाञ्शूरो दृढधन्वा जितक्लमः ||...कर्णस्त्वमेको महाबाहुः स्वबाहुबलदर्पितः || भीमसेनमनादृत्य रणेऽयुध्यत सूतजः | योऽजयत्समरे कर्णो पुरंदर इवासुरम्|| न स पाण्डुसुतो जेतुं शक्यः केनाचिदाहवे |'.

On another occasion when *Bhima* was leading a charge, it was seen that *Karna* was issuing a shower of arrows on *Bhima* putting him in a disadvantage. Before *Bhima* himself pounces on *Karna* with an aggressive posture but *Karna* drew his limbs and made his attempt ineffective. *Bhima* had to support himself by the flag mast of the chariot. He wanted to seize *Karna* and take him a prisoner like an eagle would do its prey, which drew involuntary admiration even from *Kauravas*. *Bhima* even after he was without his chariot and bow, sprang up like a true warrior to fight again even as *Karna* readied himself to fight with him again 'तं च दृष्ट्वा रथोपस्थे निलीनं व्यथितेन्द्रियम्|| ध्वजमस्य समासाद्य तास्थौ भीमो महानिले | तदस्य कुरवः सर्वे चारणाश्चाभ्यपूजयन्|| यदियेष रथात्कर्णं हर्तुं तार्य इवोपरगम्| स छिन्नधन्वा विरथः स्वधर्ममनुपालयन्|| सरथं पृष्ठतः कृत्वा युद्धायैव व्यवस्थितः | तद्विहत्यास्य राधायस्तत एनं समाभ्ययात्|| संरम्भात्पाण्डवं संख्ये युद्धाय समुपस्थितम्||'

That day's battle ends with *Karna* having an upper hand. Deprived of his weapons, *Bhima* took shelter behind the heap of dead bodies of the elephants which *Arjuna* had earlier killed. When *Karna* destroyed the heap, *Bhima* started throwing parts of the body, bones of the elephants as well parts of the chariots at *Karna*, each of which *Karna* destroyed even as they were thrown. *Bhima* then with a furious intent pounces on *Karna* to kill him with his fist, when he remembers that *Arjuna* has vowed to kill himself, therefore, even though he was capable of killing him, refrained from doing so 'क्षीणशस्त्रस्तु कौन्तेयः कर्णेन समभिद्रुतः || दृष्ट्वार्जुनहतान्नागान्पतितान् पर्वतोपमान्| रथमार्गविधानार्थं व्यायुधः प्रविवेश ह |...तमस्य विशिखैः कर्णो व्यधमत्कुञ्जरं पुनः || हस्त्यङ्गान्यथ कर्णाय प्राहिणोत्पाण्डुनन्दनः | चक्राण्यश्वांस्तथा चान्यद्यद्यत्पश्यति भूतले || तदतदादाय चिक्षेप क्रुद्धः कर्णाय पाण्डवः | तदस्य सर्वं चिच्छेद क्षिप्तं शितै शरैः || भीमोऽपि मुष्टिमुद्यम्य वज्रगर्भां सुदारुणम्| हन्तुमैच्छत्सूतपुत्रं संस्मरन्नर्जुन क्षणात्|| शक्तोऽपि नावधीत्कर्णं समर्थः पाण्डुनन्दनः | रक्षमाणः प्रतिज्ञां तां या

कृता सव्यसाचिना ||'.

Even after *Karna* made *Bhima* unconscious with his arrows, *Karna* remembering the promise given to *Kunti*, refrained from killing *Bhima* and merely touches his body with the tip of his bow - 'व्यायुधं नावधीच्चैनं कर्णः कुन्त्या वचः स्मरन्| धनुषोऽग्रेण तं कर्ण संऽभिद्रुत्य परामृशत्||'. But unaware of the reason why he *had* touched him with the bow without hitting him, *Bhima* like an angry serpent snatches *Karna's* bow and hits him with the same - 'धनुषा स्पृष्टामात्रेण क्रुद्धः सर्प इव श्वसन् आविध्य सधनुस्तस्य कर्णं मूर्धन्यताडयत्||'. Though *Karna* was angry, he smilingly chides referring him as impotent without manliness, a glutton, devoid the wisdom of weapons, afraid to fight, impetuous adolescent, never to dare in future to fight, being capable of going only to those places where there exists food and drinks and not where the great battles are fought. He deserves to eat only forests fruits and roots and not stand and fight a battle. One known as cook in *Viratas's* kitchen, capable of getting only dishes prepared by servants, such one should not aspire to be a warrior. Saying thus he touched him again with the tip of his bow and said that he should fight battles with some other not with a warrior like him - 'पुनः पुनस्तूबरक मूढ औदरिकेति च | अकृतास्त्रक मा योत्सीर्बाल संग्रामकातर || यत्र भोज्यं बहुविधं भक्ष्यं पेयं च पाण्डव | तत्र त्वां दुर्मते योग्यं न युद्धेपु कदाचन || क्व युद्धं क्व मुनित्वं च वनं गच्छ वृकोदर | न त्वं युद्धोचितस्तात वनवासरतिर्भवान् || सूदं त्वामहमाजाने मात्स्ये प्रेष्यककारकम्| सूदान्भृत्यजनान्दासांस्त्वं गृहे त्वरयन्भृशम्| योग्यस्ताडयितुं कोधाद्भोजनार्थं वृकोदर || फलमूलाशने शक्तस्त्वं तथातिथिपूजने न त्वां शस्त्रसमुद्योगे योग्यं मन्ये वृकोदर || अथैनं तत्र संलीनमस्पृशद्धनुषा पुनः | प्रहसंश्च पुनर्वाक्यं भीममाह वृषस्तदा ||'. Therefore, he should go and take shelter under *Krishna* and *Arjuna* or go home saying children have no place on the battle field 'गच्छ वा यत्र तौ कृष्णौ तौ त्वां रक्षिष्यतो रणे | गृहं वा गच्छ कौन्तेय किं ते युद्धेन बालक ||'

Karna knowing himself as *Kunti's* son and rightfully *Pandu's* son is shown again by *Vyasa*, as one perplexed by the strange events which fate seems to be playing on him - 'सोऽस्मि कृष्ण तथा जात पाण्डोः पुत्रोऽस्मि धर्मतः... यदि जानाति मां . . कुन्त्या प्रथमजं पुत्रं न स राज्यं ग्रहीष्यति' and lest *Arjuna* may refuse to fight him 'समुपानाय कौन्तेय युद्धाय मम केशव | मन्त्रसंवरणं कुर्वन्नित्यमेव परंतप ||. He is conscious that he spoke stinging words to them just to please *Duryodhana* 'यदाब्रुवमहं कृष्ण कटुकानि स्म पाण्डवान्| प्रियार्थं धार्तराष्ट्रस्य ..' being devoted to him and being obliged for possessions and prestige 'धृतराष्ट्रकुले कृष्ण दुर्योधनसमाश्रयम्| ..मां च कृष्ण समासाद्य कृतः शस्त्रसमुद्यमः | दुर्योधनेन वर्ष्णेय विग्रहश्चापि पाण्डवैः || and never deviating from his course of out fear or favour - 'वधात्बन्धात्भयाद् वापि लोभाद्वापि जनार्दन | अनृतं नोत्सहे कर्तुं धार्तराष्ट्रस्य धीमतः ||'. Therefore, when *Bhima* comes before him, memory of his promises to his mother comes makes affection for his younger brother springs in his heart making the entire situation poignant with possible and probable freedom to tease him rather than harm him. *Karna* was a great warrior seeped in क्षत्रधर्म despite his declared preference for *Duryodhana*, which was more by way of repaying a debt of gratitude, performing many of his outward actions to please *Duryodhana* than any thing else, responding to *Pandavas* as playing his role. A perfect practitioner of *Krishna's* advise to *Arjuna* 'स्वधर्ममपि चावेक्ष्य न विकम्पितुमर्हसि | धर्म्याद्धि युद्धाच्छ्रेयोऽन्यत्क्षत्रियस्य न विद्यते ||... अथ चेत्त्वमिदं धर्म्यं संग्रामं न करिष्यसि | ततः स्वधर्मं कीर्तिं च हित्वा पापमवाप्स्यसि ||...सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयजयौ | ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैवं पापमवाप्स्यसि ||', gaining appreciation even from *Bhishma* when he asked him to be towards *Duryodhana* as *Krishna* is to *Pandavas*, - कौरवाणां भव गतिर्यथा विष्णुर्दिवौकसाम्||, making *Karna's* character glow in the backdrop of his association with the dark forces. A great personality indeed misunderstood and misjudged among all the greats of his day.

But *Bhima* is not one who would leave things go without contesting. Therefore, he reminds *Karna* that he has been defeated by him more than once therefore, there is no reason for him to brag too much. He calls him to wrestle with him so that he may be killed even as *Kichaka* was killed earlier by him 'कर्णस्य वचनं श्रुत्वा भीमसेनोऽतिदारुणम्| उवाच कर्णं प्रहसन्सर्वेषां शृण्वातां वचः || जितस्त्वमसकृद्दुष्ट कत्थसे किं वृथाऽऽत्मना ||..मल्लयुद्धं मया सार्धं कुरु दुष्कुलसम्भव | महाबलो महाभोगी कीचको निहतो यथा || तथा त्वां घातयिष्यामि पश्यत्सु सर्वराजसु |'. But without replying *Bhima*, *Karna* left the place without speaking a word.

Karna was so much troubled by his identity which needed to be concealed in spite of it being so glorious one that every time his response becomes transferred as unconcealed egoism and arrogance. He repeated his valour in the very presence of *Arjuna* and *Krishna*, which could not be tolerated by them. *Arjuna* separates *Karna* from *Bhima* shooting powerful arrows on him, which pierced his body

even as swans enter their cave. This made *Karna* depart post haste from the place to return back to his camp 'एवं च विरथं कृत्वा कर्णो व्यकत्थयत्|| प्रमुखे वृष्णिसिंहस्य पार्थस्य च महात्मनः | ततो राजञ्शालार्धांताञ्शराञ्शाखामृगध्वजः || प्राहिणोत्सूतपुत्राय केशवेन प्रचोदिता || ततः पार्थभुजोत्सृष्टाः शराः कनकभूषणाः || गाण्डीवप्रभवाः कर्णं हंसाः क्रौञ्चमिवाविशन्|| स भुजङ्गैरिवाविष्टैर्गाण्डीवप्रेषितैः शरैः || भीमसेनादपासेधत्सूतपुत्रं धनंजयः ||'.

Satyaki not being aware of the developments goes to help *Bhima* being inconvenienced by *Karna* but seeing him advance; *Alambusha* blocks his passage but is soon killed. While *Krishna* was praising *Satyaki* as a companion like whom there is no one among them, 'यस्य नास्ति समो योधः कौरवेषु कथंचन |', *Arjuna* expresses concern worrying about *Yudhishthira* safety, whom *Satyaki* was expected to guard. He is doubly burdened having to kill *Jayadratha* and also protect *Satyaki* -'न हि जानामि वृत्तान्तं धर्मराजस्य केशव | सात्वतेन विहीनः स यदि जीवति व न वा || एतेन हि महाबाहो रक्षितव्यः स पार्थिवः | तमेष कथमुत्सर्ज्य मम कृष्ण पदानुगः || सोऽयं गुरुतरो भारः सैन्धवार्थे समाहिताः | ज्ञातव्यश्च हि मे राजा रक्षितव्यश्च सात्यकिः || जयद्रथश्च हन्तव्यो लम्बते च दिवाकरः |',

Here on the other hand, *Bhurishrava* wanting to please *Duryodhana* challenges *Satyaki*, 'अद्य त्वां समरे हत्वा नित्यं शूराभिमानिनम्| नन्दयिष्यामि दाशार्ह कुरुराजं सुयोधनम्|| अद्य मद्बाणनिर्दग्धं पतितं धरणीतले | द्रक्ष्यतस्त्वां रणे वीरौ सहितौ केशवार्जुनौ || ...अद्य कृष्णस्य पार्थश्च धर्मराजश्च माधव | हते त्वयि निरुत्साहा रणं त्यक्ष्यन्त्यसंशायन्||' only for *Satyaki* to reply smilingly that neither he is afraid of him nor can he be defeated in a battle, 'कौरवेय न संत्रासो विद्यते मम संयुगे || नाहं भीषयितुं शक्यो वाङ्मात्रेण तु केवलम्| स मां निहन्यात्संग्रामे यो मां कुर्यान्निरायुधम्||. The battle between these two becomes fierce, with *Bhurishrava* having an upper hand on *Satyaki*, seeing which *Krishna* speaks to *Arjuna* with concern that *Satyaki* had become weak and should therefore be saved, 'क्षीणयुद्धं सात्वतं युद्धमानं ततोऽब्रवीदर्जुनं वासुदेवः | पश्यस्वैन विरथं युध्यमानं रणे वरं सर्वधनुर्धराणाम्|| सीदन्तं सात्यकिं पश्य पार्थैनं परिरक्ष च || प्रविष्टो भारतीं भित्वा तव पाण्डव पृष्ठतः | योधितश्च महावीर्यैः सर्वैर्भारत भारतैः || पश्य वृष्ण्यन्धकव्याघ्रं सौमदत्तिवशं गतम्|| परिश्रान्तं गतं भूमौ कृत्वा कर्म सुदुष्करम्| तवान्तेवासिनं वीर पालयार्जुन सात्यकिम्||'. Finally, a moment comes when both *Bhurishrava* and *Satyaki* are reduced to climb down and fight with swords. *Bhurishrava* catches hold of *Satyaki's* long hair and kicks him on his chest even as he tries to free himself.

At this stage *Arjuna* confides in *Krishna* that since his attention was concentrated on *Jayadratha* he was not attentive of *Satyaki.* He will therefore now fulfill *Krishna's* desire. Saying thus he severs *Bhurishrava's* hands from his shoulder 'सैन्धवे सक्तदृष्टित्वान्नैनं पश्यामि माधवम्| एतत् त्वमुकरं कर्म यादवार्थे करोम्यहम्|| इत्युक्त्वा वचनं कुर्वन्वासुदेवस्य पाण्डवः | ततः क्षुरप्रं निशितं गाण्डीवे समयोजयत्|| पार्थबाहुविसृष्टः स महोल्केव नभश्च्युता | स खड्गं यज्ञशीलस्य साङ्गदं बाहुमिच्छनत्||', making *Bhurishrava* let go *Satyaki. Bhurishrava* castigates *Arjuna* for his unrighteous act of cutting his hands, when he was engaged in a fight with another warrior. He contemptuously asks him from whom had he received such instruction was it from *Indra*, *Rudra*, *Drona* or *Kripa*? He was expected to know weaponry better than many other in the world. A knowledgeable person does not hit a person who is un-prepared, afraid, without a chariot, who begs for life or in difficulty. How then could *Arjuna* have performed such despicable act? It is true that one acts according to one's company. He performed such a low act for saving *Satyaki's* life, which could have been surely due to *Krishna's* advise, otherwise this could not have been due to his own intention who indeed in this world will bring trouble when he is fighting with out such knowledge? Indeed one who is not friendly to *Krishna*, from him such actions could never have beam expected. Because *Vrishnis* and *Andhakas* are by nature un-cultured and by nature arrogant; how can one expect they be the standard for one's actions! - 'नृशंसं बत कौन्तेय कर्मेदं कृतवानसि | अपश्यतो विपक्तस्य यन्मे बाहुमचिच्छिदः || किं नु वक्ष्यसि राजानं धर्मपुत्रं युधिष्ठिरम्| किं कुर्वाणो मया संख्ये हतो भूरिश्रवा रणे || इदमिन्द्रेण ते साक्षादुपदिष्टं महात्मना | अस्त्रं वा पार्थ द्रोणेनाथ कृपेण वा || ननु नामास्त्रधर्मज्ञस्त्वं लोकेऽभ्यधिकः परैः | सोऽयुध्यमानस्य कथ रणे प्रहृतवानसि || न प्रमत्ताय भीताय विरथाय प्रयाचते | व्यसने वर्तमानाय प्रहरन्ति मनस्विनः || इदं तु नीचाचरितमसत्पुरुषसेवितम्| कथमाचरितं पार्थ पापकर्म सुदुष्करम् ||...येषु येषु नरव्याघ्र यत्र यत्र च वर्तते | आशु तच्छीलतामेति तदिदं त्वयि दृश्यते || कथं हि राजवंशस्त्वं कौरवेयो विशेषतः | क्षत्रधर्मापक्रान्तः सुवृत्तश्चरितव्रतः || इदं तु यदतिक्षुद्रं वार्ष्णेयार्थे कृतं त्वया | वासुदेवमतं नूनं नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते || को हि नाम प्रमत्ताय परेण सह युध्यते | ईदृशं व्यसनं दद्याद्यो न कृष्णसखो भवेत्|| व्रात्या संक्लिष्टकर्माणः प्रकृत्यैव च गर्हिताः | वृष्ण्यन्धकाः कथं पार्थ प्रमाणं भवता कृता ||'.

Arjuna, however, responds to *Bhurishrava's* accusations with equal verve, reminding him that as an old respected man it was not proper to accuse them knowing *Krishna* and himself well. Being fully enlightened of the essence of *vedic* scriptures he is beyond performing any unrighteous acts, 'व्यक्तं हि जीर्ण

णोऽपितृद्धिं जरयते नरः || अनर्थकमिदं सर्वं यत्त्वया व्याहृतं प्रभो | जानन्नेव हृषीकेश गर्हसे मां च पाण्डवम्|| संग्रामाणां हि धर्मज्ञः सर्वशास्त्रार्थपारगः | न चाधर्मं हं कुर्यां जानश्चैव हि मुह्यसे ||'. When relatives, companions and friends fight one another, it is quite in order if one has protection of the strongest of them all. *Satyaki* is his companion as well as a relative; therefore, protecting his life was his righteous duty 'यध्यन्ति क्षत्रियाः शत्रून्स्वैः स्वैः परिवृता नराः | भ्रातृभिः पितृभिः पुत्रैस्तथा सम्बन्धिबान्धवैः || वयस्यैश्च मित्रैश्च तं च बाहुं समाश्रिताः | सकथं सात्यकिं शिष्यं सुरसम्बन्धमेव च न चात्मा रक्षितव्यो वै राजन्रणगतेनेह | यो यस्य युज्यतेऽर्थेषु स वै रक्ष्यो नराधिप ||'. Therefore *Arjuna* severed *Bhurishrava's* hands only when he was thinking of cutting *Satyaki's* his head.

Hearing these words spoken by *Arjuna*, *Bhurishrava* lapsed in silence and decide to go on fast unto death. Holding his breath and enjoining his mind as prescribed in *upanishads*, he meditated on *Brahman*, seeing which *Kaurava's* soldiers praised him and reviled *Arjuna* and *Krishna*. But seeing his actions being praised, neither *Bhurishrava* nor did *Krishna* and *Arjuna* expressed joy or any regret, *Arjuna* being irritable that meditation was not the course for *Bhurishrava* to express his displeasure, without understanding the true nature of *Dharma*. Eve when *Abhimanyu* was killed he had neither chariot nor armour, why no one questioned the righteousness of his killing 'न्यस्तशत्रस्य बालस्य विरथस्य विवर्मणः | अभिमन्योर्वधं तत धार्मिक किं नो पूजयेत्||'. It is not justified that one who himself had not been righteous in his actions, should now complain about righteousness when he himself is killed. Fie on क्षत्रधर्म that a great person like *Bhurushrvas*, worthy of giving refuge to others, should have such death 'दुर्योधनस्य क्षुद्रस्य न पामाणेऽवतिष्ठतः | सौमदत्तोर्वधः स वै साहाय्यकारिणः || धिगस्तु क्षत्रधर्मं तु यत्र त्वं पुरुषेश्वरः | अवस्थामीदृशीं प्राप्तः शरण्यः शरणप्रदः ||'. When *Arjuna* spoke these words, *Bhurishrava* bowed doewn his head without word spoken and threw his severed hand towards *Arjuna*. Seeing the extra-ordinary display of renunciation and surrender, *Krishna* endorsed *Bhurishrva* to go to those auspicious regions, where even gods desire to dwell - 'मया त्वं समनुज्ञातः कृष्णेन च महात्मना | गच्छ पुण्यकृतॉल्लेकाच्छिबिरौशीनरो यथा || ये लोका मम विमलाः सकृद्विभाता ब्रह्मद्यैः सुरवृषभैरपीष्यमानाणाः | तान्क्षिप्रं व्रज सततारिनहोत्रयाजिन्मत्तुल्यो भव गरुडोत्तमाङ्गयानः ||'.

Even as *Krishna* was lauding *Bhurishrava* thus, *Satyaki* gets up impetuously and severs his head with his sword even as those gathered around implored him not to do so 'कोशतां सर्वसैन्यानां निन्द्यमानः सुदुमनाः | वार्यमाणः स कृष्णेन पार्थेन च महात्मनाः | .. विक्रोसतां च सन्यानामवधीत्त्वं धृतव्रतम्||'. At that time *Satyaki* turns around and remonstrates them saying where were all these warriors who advise him not to kill *Bhurishrava*, when *Abhimanyu* was being killed unrighteously with no weapons in hand, - 'न हन्तव्यो न हन्तव्य इति यन्मां प्रभाषत | धर्मा वादैरधर्मिष्ठा धर्मकञ्चुकमास्थिताः || यदा बालः सुभद्रायाः सुतः शस्त्रैविना कृतः | युष्माभिर्निहतो युद्धे तदा धर्मः क्व वो गतः ||'. *Kauravas* remained speechless, even as *Bhurishrava* gave up his breath to depart to the supreme worlds 'एवमुक्ते महाराज सर्वे कौरवपुङ्गवाः | न स्म किंचिदभाषन्त मनसा सामपूजयन्||..स तेजसा शस्त्रकृतेन पूतो महाहवे देहवरं विसृज्य | आक्रमदूर्ध्वं वरदो वरार्हो व्यावृत्य धर्मेद्दण परेण रोदसि ||'.

Arjuna would tarry no further seeing the Sun is fast sinking on the western horizon, asking *Krishna* to drive him where *Jayadratha* is being protected by *Kauravas*, since he has to fulfill his vow before the Sun sets -'चोदयाश्वान्भृशं कृष्ण यतो राजा जयद्रथः | श्रूयते पूण्डरीकाक्ष त्रिषु धर्मेषुवर्तते || प्रतिज्ञां सफलां चापि कर्तुमर्हसि मेऽनघ | अस्तमेति महाबाहो त्वरमाणो दिवाकरः || एर्यद्धि पुरुषव्याघ्र महदभ्युद्यतं मया | कार्यं संरक्ष्यते चैव कुरुसेनामहारथैः || तथा नाभ्येति सूर्योऽस्तं यथा सत्यं भवेद्वचः | चोदयाश्वांस्तथा कृष्ण यथा हन्यां जयद्रथम् ||'. Protection given by *Kauravas* to *Jayadratha* and *Duryodhana* telling *Karna* that *Arjuna's* vow should not be allowed to be fulfilled infuriates *Arjuna*. 'समासाद्य च बीभत्सुः सैन्धवं समुपस्थितम्| नेत्राभ्यां क्रोधदीप्ताभ्यां सप्रेक्षान्निर्दहन्निव || ततो दुर्योधनो राजा राधेयं त्वरितोऽब्रवीत्| अर्जुनं प्रेक्ष्य संयातं जयद्रथवधं प्रति ||..यथा न वध्येत रणेऽर्जुनेन जयद्रथः कर्ण तथा कुरु || ..दिनक्षयं प्राप्य नरप्रवीरः ध्रुवो हिनः कर्ण जयो भविष्यति || सैन्धवे रक्ष्यमाणे तु सूर्यस्तामनं प्रति | मिथ्याप्रतिज्ञः कौन्तेयः प्रवेक्ष्यति हुताशनम्|| अनर्जुनायां च भुवि मुहूर्तमपि मानद | जीवितुं नोत्सहेरन्भ्रातरोऽस्य सहानुगाः ||'.

In spite of appreciation of *Arjuna* renown as skilled archer, *Duryodhana* with great confidence in *Shalya*, *Kripa* and others for protecting *Jayadratha* and killing *Arjuna*. Looking at *Arjuna* with angry eyes, he tells *Karna* that few moments are left for the Sun to set therefore he should show his bravery, so that once *Arjuna* becomes unsuccessful, he will have to die by fire. With him dead, his brothers to will not remain alive 'ततो दुर्योधनो राजा राधेयं त्वरितोऽब्रवीत्| अर्जुनं प्रेक्ष्य संयातं जयद्रथवधं प्रति || अयं स वैकर्तन युद्धकालो

विदर्शयस्वात्मबलं महात्मन्| यथा न वध्येत रणेऽर्जुनेन जयद्रथः कर्ण तथा कुरु || अल्पवशेषो दिवसो नृवीर विघतयस्वाद्य रिपुं शरौघैः | दिनक्षयं प्राप्य नरप्रवीर ध्रुवं हि नः कर्ण जयो भविष्यति || सैन्धवे रक्ष्यमाणे तु सीर्यस्यास्तमनं प्रति | मिथ्याप्रतिज्ञः कौन्तेयः प्रवेक्ष्यति हुताशनम्|| अर्जुनायां च भुवि महिुर्तमपि मिनद | जीविन्नोत्सहेरन्वै भ्रातरोऽस्य सहानुगाः ||'.

Karna, however with conscience seeming to make sneaking entry in his mind, tells surprising for once, not with unnecessary bravado and arrogance but with great responsibility and caution and *for Duryodhana's pleasure*, that he will make every effort to fight with confidence in his valor but success depends entirely on divine will 'सैन्धवार्थे परं यत्नं करिष्यमद्य संयुगे | त्वत्प्रियार्थं महाराज जयो दैवे प्रतिष्ठितः || अस्य योत्स्येऽर्जुनमहं पौरुष स्व व्यपाश्रितः || त्वदर्थे पुरुषव्याघ्र जो दैवे प्रतिष्ठितः ||'. Even as *Karna* and *Duryodhana* were thus conversing, *Arjuna* shoots on them commencing the battle. With the battle commencing with all ferocity, *Arjuna* and *Karna* shower their arrows on each other calling each other to remain on the field and not desert 'तौ वृषाविव नर्दन्तौ नरसिंहौ महारथौ | सायकैस्तु प्रतिच्छन्नं चक्रतु रश्मिजिस्मगैः || अदृश्यौ च शिरघैस्तौ निघ्नन्तावितरेतरम्| कर्ण पार्थोऽस्मि तिष्ठ त्वं काणोऽहं तिष्ठ फाल्गुन ||'

Then seeing *Arjuna* lift his *Gandeeva* bow in a great surge of chivalry, resounding the rattling sound of *Death*, or the flashing light of *Indra's* thunderbolt, or like dark clouds and tempestuous winds blowing when the worlds come to an end, or like the weird waves rising in the oceans, *Kaurava* soldiers become agitated,' 'ततो युगान्ताभ्रसमस्वनं महन्महेन्द्रचापप्रतिमं च गाण्डीवम्| चकर्ष दोर्भ्यां विहसन्भृशं ययौ दहंस्त्वादीयानयमराष्ट्रवर्धनः || श्रुत्वा निनाद धनुषश्च तस्य विस्पष्टमुत्कृष्टमिवान्तकस्य | शक्राशनिस्फोटसमं सुघोरं विकृष्यमाणस्य धनंजयेन || त्रासोद्विग्नं तथोद्भ्रान्तं त्वदीयं तद्बलं नृप | युगान्तवातसंक्षुब्धचलद्वीचितरङ्गितम्|| प्रलीनमीनमकरं सागराम्भ इवाभवत्|'. When *Arjuna* shoots arrows, they become confused not knowing the arrow was set and when it was released. In the end he shoots the powerful *Indra* weapon which frightens the enemy soldier 'ततः क्रुद्धो महाबाहुरैन्द्रमस्त्रं दुरासदम्| प्रादुश्चक्रे महाराज त्रासयन्सर्वभारतान्|| आददानं महाराज संदधानं च पाण्डवम्| उत्कर्षन्तं सृजन्तं च न स्म पश्याम लाघवात्| '. Like wise *Kauravas* too shoot arrows enveloping the surroundings, *Arjuna* destroys them with his arrows, like Sun destroying the darkness of the previous night- 'ततः शस्त्रान्धकारं तत्कौरवैः समुदीरितम्|| अशक्यं मनसाप्यन्यैः पाण्डव सम्भ्रमन्निव | नाशयामास विक्रम्य शरैर्दिव्यास्त्रमन्त्रितैः || नैशं तमोंऽशुभिः क्षिप्रं दिनादाविव भास्करः |'.

Finally after spreading confusion and thrill dispersing like *Kadamb* flowers the warriors on the battlefield -'तथा सर्वा दिशो राजन्सर्वांश्च रथिनो रणे || कदम्बीकृत्य कौन्तेयो जयद्रथमुपाद्रयाम्||', *Arjuna* left to challenge *Jayadratha* asking *Krishna* to direct his chariot there 'ततः शीघ्रतरं प्रायात्पाण्डवः सैन्धव प्रति | विवर्तमाने तिग्मांशौ हृष्टैः पीतोदकार्हयैः ||', when *Krishna* informs him since he is being protected by six able warriors, it would not be possible to kill in normal manner. Therefore, he himself will have to devise a way by which Sun will be covered so that *Jayadratha* may believe that Sun has set. Thai is exactly when *Jayadratha* who is eager to keep himself safe but will come out without being conscious that he is putting himself at risk. That would be the moment when he should be killed. *Arjuna* agrees to the plan 'एष मध्ये कृतः षड्भिः पार्थ वीरैर्महारथैः | जीविनेप्सुर्महाबाहो भीतस्तिष्ठति सैन्धवः || एताननिर्हित्य रणे षड्रथान्पुरुषर्षभ | न शक्यः सैन्धवो हन्तुं यतो निर्व्याजमर्जुनः || योगमत्र विधास्यामि सूर्यस्यावरणं प्रति | अस्तंगत इति व्यक्तं द्रक्ष्यस्तेकः स सिन्धुराट्|| हर्षेण जीविताकांक्षी विनाशार्थं तव प्रभो | न गोप्स्यति दुराचारः स आत्मानं कथचन || तत्र छिद्रं प्रहर्तव्यं त्वयास्य कुरुसत्तम | व्यपेक्षा नैव कर्तव्या गतोऽस्तामिति भास्करः ||.

Arjuna also agrees with *Krishna's* suggestion and accordingly *Krishna* creates an illusion concealing the Sun with his discus *Sudarshan chakra* the resultant darkness making *Jayadratha* believe that the Sun is set and he is free to come out of hiding. *Kauravas* too become delirious that *Jayadratha* is safe and *Arjuna* will now have to end his life. *Jayadratha* stretches his neck out to see Sun set in the west - 'ततोऽसृजत्तमः कृष्णः सूर्यस्यावरणं प्रति || योगी योगेन संयुक्तो योगिनामीश्वरो हरिः | सृष्टे तमसि कृष्णेन गतोऽस्तमिति भास्करः || त्वदीया जहृषुर्योधाः पार्थनाशान्नराधिपः | ते प्रहृष्टा रणे राजन्नापश्यन् सैनिका रविम्|| उन्नाम्य वक्त्राणि तदा स च राजा जयद्रथः | वीक्षमाणे ततस्तस्मिन्सिन्धुराजे दिवाकरम्||'. पुनरेवाब्रवीत्कृष्णो धनंजयमिदं वचः | पश्य सिन्धुपतिं वीरं प्रेक्षमाणं दिवाकरम्|| भय हि विप्रमुच्यैनत्त्वत्तो भरतसत्तम | अयं कालो महाबाहो वधायास्य दुरात्मनः || छिन्धि मूर्धनमस्याशु कुरु साफल्यमात्मनः |'. At that very moment *Krishna* tells *Arjuna* to observe *Jayadratha* sticking out his head to see the setting Sun, with mind fee from fear. Now is the time hen he should shoot and severe his head in such a way that it would fall on his father's laps, because if it falls on the ground then *Arjuna's* head would itself be shattered to hundred of piece, such being the boon which *Shiva* had given to *Jayadratha* 'पुनरेवाब्रवीत्कृष्णो धनंजयमिद वचः | पश्य सिन्धुपतिं वीर प्रेक्षमाणं दिवाकरम्|| भयं हि विप्रमुच्यैनत्त्वत्तो भरतसत्तम | अयं कालो महाबाहो वधायास्य दुरात्मनः || छिन्धि मूर्धनमस्याशु कुरु साफल्यमात्मनः ... अब्रवीच्च पुनस्तत्र त्वरमाणो जनार्दनः | धनंजय शिरश्छिन्धि

धवस्य दुरात्मनः | अस्तं महीधरश्रेष्ठं यियासति दिवाकरः | श्रुणुष्वैतच्च वाक्यं मे जयद्रथवधं प्रति || वृद्धक्षत्रः सैन्धवस्य पिता जगति विश्रुतः | स कालेनेह महता धव पाप्तवानसुतान्||...समरे युध्यमानस्य वहतो महतीं धुरम्|| धरण्यां मम पुत्रस्य पातयिष्यति यः शिरः | तस्यापि शतधा मूर्धा फलिष्यति न संशयः तस्माज्जयद्रथस्य त्वं शिरश्छित्वा महामृधे | दिव्येनास्त्रेण रिपुहन्घोरेणाद्भुतकर्मणा || सकुण्डलं सिन्धुपतेः प्रभञ्जनसुतानुज | उत्सङ्गे पातयस्वास्य वृद्धक्षत्रस्य भारत अथ त्वमस्य मूर्धानं पातयिष्यसि भूतले | तवापि शतधा मूर्धा फलिष्यति न संशयः ||'. *Arjuna* does as instructed and when *Jayadratha's* ead falls on his father's lap, it is his father's head that becomes shattered in thousand pieces 'स तु गांडीवनिर्मु शरः श्येन इवाशुगः | छित्वा शिरः सिन्धुपतेरुत्पपात विहायसम्|| ...ततः सुमहदाश्चर्यं तत्रापश्याम भारत | समन्तपञ्चकाद्वाह्यं शिरो यद्व्यहरत्ततः || दासीनस्य तस्थाय कृष्णकेशं सकुण्डलम्| सिन्धुराजस्य मूर्धानमुत्सङ्गे समपातयत्||...ततस्तस्य नरेन्द्रस्य पुत्रमूर्धनि भूतले | गते तस्यापि शतधा मूर्धागच्छदरिंदम ||'.

Once the task is performed, *Krishna* withdraws the illusion created by him, and soon thereafter *auarvas* realize that the obscure atmosphere was created by *Krishna* to exterminate *Jayadratha* - 'ततो नहते राजन्सिन्धुराजे किरीटिना | तमस्तद्वासुदेवेन संहृतं भरतर्षभ || पश्चाज्ज्ञातं महीपाल तव पुत्रैः सहानुगैः | वासुदेवप्रयुक्तेयं मायेति नृपसत्तम || एवं स निहतो तपार्थेनामिततेजसा | अक्षौहिणीरष्ट हत्वा जामाता तव सैन्धवः ||'. Once *Jayadratha* was killed, *Krishna* and *Arjuna* celebrate e success blowing their respective conches, even as others celebrate this great achievement. Ion the far stance even *Yudhishthira* coming to know of this sound becomes pleased.

Seeing *Jayadratha* thus dead *Kripacharya* and *Ashvatthama* challenge *Arjuna* from two sides. ut conscious that a teacher and teacher's son are not to be killed, *Arjuna* does not kill them but only jured them with his arrows - 'सोऽजिघांसुर्गुरुं संख्ये गुरोस्तनयमेव च | चकाराचार्यकं तत्र कुन्तीपुत्रो धनंजयः ||'. When he observe e teacher falling without any consciousness, he became very sad - 'धिगस्तु क्षात्रमाचारं धिगस्तु बलपौरुषम्|| को हि ब्राह्मणमाचार्यमभिद्रुह्येत मादृशः | ऋषिपुत्रो ममाचार्यो द्रोणस्य परमः सखा || एष शेते रथोपस्थे कृपो मद्बाणपीडितः |..तदिदं नरकायाद्य कृतं कर्म मया ध्रुवम्|| आचार्यं शरवर्षेण रथे सादयता कृपम्|..नमस्तस्मै सुपूज्याय गौतमायापलायिने || धिगस्तु मम वार्ष्णेय यदस्मै प्रहराम्यहम्|'.

Finally when the Sun sets on the horizon, *Krishna* embraces *Arjuna* saying that he has ccomplished a task which would not have been possible even for gods. There are many strong warriors mong *Kauravas* but they dare not challenge *Arjuna* in battle, fighting like *Indra* or *Shiva*. *Krishna* ssures that when he would kill *Karna* also in the same manner 'ततो राजन्हृषीकेशः संग्रामशिरसि स्थितम्| तीर्णप्रतिज्ञं बीभत्सुं परिष्वज्यैनमब्रवीत्| दिष्ट्या सम्पादिता जिष्णो प्रतिज्ञा महती त्वया || दिष्ट्या विनिहतः पापो वृद्धक्षत्रः सहात्मजः | धार्तराष्ट्रबलं प्राप्य देवसेनापि भारत || सीदेत समरे ष्णो नात्रकार्या विचारणा |..नेदृशं सक्तुयात्कश्चिद्रणे कर्तुं पराक्रमम्|| यादृशं कृतवानद्य त्वमेकः शत्रुतापनः | एवमेव हतं कर्णं सानुबन्धं दुरात्मनि || वर्धयिष्यामि यस्त्वां विजितारिं हतद्विषम्|'. *Arjuna*, however, knows that in the ultimate analysis it is *Krishna* alone who is esponsible for the actions performed by beings. Therefore, when he is their protector, success is bound be on their side and *Pandavas* will always be under his obligation 'अनाश्चर्यो जयस्तेषां येषां नाथोऽसि केशव | त्वत्प्रसादान्महीं कृत्स्नां सम्प्राप्स्यति युधिष्ठिरः | तव प्रभावो वार्ष्णेय तवैव विजयः प्रभो | वर्धनीयास्तव वयं सदैव मधुसूदन ||.

Then seeing *Karna* approach towards *Satyaki* furiously, *Arjuna* tells *Krishna* that possibly eing angry at *Bhurishrava's* death, he seems to be approaching them. But *Krishna* tells him that this is ot the proper time to be concerned about him, since *Satyaki* alone is capable of dealing with him, since t the moment he possesses the great weapon. He is fully aware when his final moment is to come when *rjuna* will kill him with your sharp arrows 'अहं ज्ञास्यामि कौन्तेय कालमस्य दुरात्मनः | यत्रैनं विशिखैस्तीक्ष्णैः पातयिष्यसि भूतले ||'.

Then going to *Yudhishthira* they convey that *Jayadratha* is dead and *Arjuna* has fulfilled his ow 'दिष्ट्या वर्धसि राजेन्द्र हतशत्रुर्नरोत्तम | दिष्ट्या निस्तीर्णवांश्चैव प्रतिज्ञामनुजस्तव ||'. *Yudhishthira* expresses his happiness at the uccess which *Arjuna* has achieved with *Krishna's* help. *Krishna's* presence by their side is ever ecognized and acknowledged by them, performing their actions as his instruments for fulfilling the *ivine intent* and *purpose*. Therefore, *Yudhishthira* to confidently declares that though he is happy about *rjuna's* success he is equally conscious that all this is entirely due to his grace on them 'कृष्ण दिष्ट्या मम प्रीतिर्म ति प्रतिपादिता | त्वया गुप्तेन गोविन्द घ्नता पापं जयद्रथम्|| किं नु नात्यद्भुतं तेषां येषां नस्त्वं समाश्रयः | न तेषां दुष्कृतं किंचित्त्रिषु लोकेषु विद्यते || सर्वलोकगुरुर्ये ं त्व नाथो मधुसूदन | त्वत्प्रसादाद्धि गोविन्दवयं जेष्यामहे रिपून्|| स्थितः नित्यात्मना नित्यं प्रियेषु च हितेषु च | त्वां चैवास्माभिराश्रित्य कृतः शस्त्रसमुद्यमः || त्वत्प्रसादाद्धृषीकेश जगत्स्थावरजङ्गमम्| स्ववर्त्मनि स्थितं वीर जपहोमेषु वर्तते ||'.

Jayadratha's death comes as a great blow to *Duryodhana* who loosing all enthusiasm to ontinue the fight, laments that in world there is no one who can defeat *Arjuna*, not even *Drona*, *Karna*, *Ashvatthama* or *Kripa*. Their family has been reduced without any strength. Having placed confidence

in which he had rejected *Krishna's* conciliation, even he, *Karna* is stands now defeated. Then going to *Drona* he confides with self-pity that the great rulers who had come to fight for his sake are now lying dead, he surely is the most unfortunate one that having caused death of his friends, which sin he cannot hope to wipe out even if he performs *Asahamedha* sacrifice. It would, indeed be better for him to die. Why does the earth not split sinking him within its bowels. *Bhishma* is dying by his own will and even the teacher is neglecting to fight Arjuna being his dear pupil. It is indeed true that one who undertakes important assignments without recognizing the true friends is bound to fails in his purpose. It seems that every one had let me down him who being greedy for wealth and possessions took their help 'ये मदर्थे पग्प्सन्तं वसुधां वसुधाधिपाः | ते हित्वा वसुधैशवर्यं वसुधामधिशेरते || सोऽहं कापुरुषः कृत्वा मित्राणां क्षयमीदृशम्| अश्वमेधमहस्रेण पावितुं न समुत्सहे || मम लुब्धस्य पापस्य तथा धर्मापचायिनः | व्यायामेन जिगीयन्तः प्राप्ता वैवस्वतक्षयम्|| कथं पतितवृत्तस्य पृथिवी सुहृदां दुहः| विवरं नाशाकद्दातुं मम पार्थि वमंमर्द ||... स्वयं हि मृत्युर्विहितः सत्यसंधेन संयुगे | भवानुपेक्षां कुरुते शिष्यातवादर्जुनस्य हि ||..योहि मित्रमिवाज्ञय यायातधेान मन्दधीः | मित्रार्थे योजयत्नेनं तस्य सोऽर्थोऽवसीदति || तादृगस्य कृतमिदं मम कार्यं सुहृत्तमैः | मोहाल्लब्धस्य पापस्य जिह्मस्य धनामीहतः ||'.

Hearing these words of extreme dejection, *Drona* becomes disturbed and says to *Duryodhana*, why is he speaking these unpleasant words, having known all the time that *Arjuna* is difficult to be defeated. *Shikhandi* could dare to kill *Bhishma* only when *Arjuna* protected him. Therefore it is no wonder that he should conclude that *Kauarvas* would surely be defeated. He reminds his warning him that dice which *Shakuni* threw would soon be the weapons for their own destruction, 'अक्षान्न तेऽक्षा निशिता भाणास्ते शत्रुतापनाः'. Nevertheless he assures that he himself will not remove his armour unless he defeats *Panchalas*. He encourages *Duryodhana* to enter the field if so desires, because from thenceforward the battle will be fought even after the Sun sets 'त्वं च दुर्योधन बलं यदि शक्तोऽसि पालय | रात्रावपि च योत्स्यन्ते संरब्धाः कुरुसञ्जयः ||'.

But *Duryodhana* was not yet reconciled even by the words which *Drona* spoke. He continued to hold him responsible for having affection for *Arjuna*, therefore, not fighting with full concentration and energy. But for one a mellowed down *Karna* counsels patience to *Duryodhana* asking him not reproach *Drona* who has been fighting bravely without worrying even for his own life. If *Arjuna* has breached his battle formation it is neither surprise nor was it *Drona's* his fault. *Arjuna* is young and endowed with divine weapons besides *Krishna* is his charioteer. In such circumstances if he succeeds and *Drona* does not, let that be so. *Drona* is old and has not been active. It is indeed true that no one can change the divine intention, howsoever one may struggle. If *Jayadratha* died it was surely because of the *divine intent*. It could also be the same *divine intent* that *Duryodhana* has not been succeeding in spite of possessing a strong army. Therefore, it would be better if one performs one's actions without having any expectations, knowing that success depends entirely on *divine intent* - 'आचार्यं मा विगर्हस्व शक्त्यासौ युध्यते द्विजः | यथाबलं यथोत्साहं त्यक्त्वा जीवितमात्मनः || यद्येनं समतीकम्य प्रविष्टः श्वेतवाहनः | नात्र सूक्ष्मोऽपि दोषः स्यादाचार्यस्य कदाचन || कृति दक्षो युवा शूरः कृतास्त्रो वानरलक्षणम्|| कृष्णेन च गृहीताश्वमभेद्यकवचावृतः | गाण्डीवमजरं दिव्यं धनुरादय वीर्यवान्|| आचार्यः स्थविरो राजञ्शीघ्रयाने तथाक्षमः | बाहुव्यायामचेष्टायामशक्तस्तु नराधिपः . . दैवाधिष्टेऽन्यथाभावो न मन्ये विद्यते क्वचित्| यतो नो युध्यमानानां परं शक्त्या सुयोधन || सैन्धवो निहतो युद्धे दैवमत्र परं स्मृतम्| . . दैवोपसृष्टः पुरुषो यत्कर्म कुरुते क्वचित्| कृतं कृतं हि तत्कर्म दैवेन विनपत्यते || तत् कार्यमविशङ्केन निर्दिष्टे दैवे प्रतिष्ठिता ||'.

When *Jayadratha* was killed and the Sun disappeared on the western horizon the battle did not stop as usual, but as *Drona* had foreseen, it continued even during the night, with all the warriors assembling for battling with each other. Consequently many inauspicious omens came to be seen on the horizon. Dust enveloped the armies as they fought with each other, which obscured their minds, culminating in a great destruction on both sides. When *Krishna* observed *Karna* was destroying many among *Pandavas*, he became concerned realizing that the time has not yet arrived for *Arjuna* to challenge him, since he was still possessed of the powerful weapon given by *Indra*, preserved obviously by him to be used on *Arjuna*. In these circumstances, he decided that only *Ghatotkacha*, *Bhima's* son born of his demon wife *Hidimba*, would be capable of confronting him at this stage, since he was endowed with many magical weapons, 'विविधानि तवास्त्राणि सन्ति माया च राक्षसी' whose power increases with passage of the battle, 'तव ह्यत्र बलं भीमं मायाश्च तव दुस्तराः | संग्रामे युध्यमानस्य सततं भीमनन्दन ||..रात्रौ हि राक्षसा भूयो भवन्त्यमितविक्रमाः |

वन्तः सुदुर्धर्षाः शूरा विक्रान्तचारिणः ||'. Therefore, *Krishna* assigns *Ghatotkacha* the responsibility of killing *arna* while the rest will take over *Drona* and others.

When *Ghatotkacha* comes on the field, there is a great havoc on the battlefield. It becomes ımanageable for *Kauravas* to deal him, with his strength and illusory powers. No sooner he kills *ıtasura's* son, *Alambusha, Karna* challenges him as *Indra* did challenge *Shambara.* Every weapon hich *Karna* uses is broken by *Ghatotkacha* with equally powerful demonic weapon. Seeing him some mes invisible, soldiers wonder how they could ever defeat him 'अन्तर्हितं राक्षसेन्द्रं विदित्वा सम्प्राकोशनाकुरवः सर्व एव | कथं यं राक्षसः कूटयाधी हन्यात्कर्णं समरेऽदृश्यमानः ||'. They were confused and frightened by his illusory powers भीमनानाविधशस्त्रपातैर्घटोत्कचेनाभिहितं समन्तात्| दौर्योधनं वै बलमार्तरूपमावर्तमानं ददृशे भ्रमत्तत्|| हाहाकृतं समपरिवर्तमानं संलीयमानं च विषण्णरूपम्| ते ार्यभावात्पुरुषप्रवीराः पराङ्मुखा नो बभूवुस्तदानीम्||'.

Seeing *Ghatotkacha's* extraordinary valor, *Karna* considers the next step to be taken, since *Kaurava* soldiers were not even as frightened of *Bhima* and *Arjuna* as they were by him requesting *Karna* to destroy him before he destroys them all 'करिष्यतः किञ्च नोभीमपार्थौ तपन्तमेनं जहि पापं निशीथं | यो नः ग्रामाद्घोररूपान्विमुच्येन्नसनः पार्थान्सबलान्योधयेत || तस्मादेनं राक्षसं घोररूपं शक्त्या जहि त्वं दत्तया वासवेन | मा कौरवाः सर्व एवेन्द्रकल्पा रात्रियुद्धे कर्ण नेशुः योधाः ||'. *Karna* then takes up in hand the powerful *Vaijayanti* weapon given by *Indra* in exchange of the divine earrings and which he had reserved for using against *Arjuna.* Then he discharges the weapon which looked like Death's extended tongue, resplendent and shining like a powerful meteor on *Ghatotkacha* 'शक्तिं श्रेष्ठां वैजयन्तीमसह्यां समाददे तस्य वधं चिकीर्षन्|| यासौ राजन्निहिता वर्षपूगान्वधयाजौ सत्कृता फाल्गुनस्य | यां वै प्रादान्सूतपुत्राय शक्रः शक्तिं श्रेष्ठां कुण्डलाभ्यां निमाय || तां वै शक्तिं लेलिहानां प्रदीप्तां पाशैर्युक्तामन्तकस्येव जिह्वाम्| मृत्योः स्वसारं ज्वलितामिवोल्कां वैकर्तन प्राहिणोद्राक्षसाय ||'. The powerful *Vaijayanti* weapon then reducing *Ghatotkacha's* illusion to ashes, pierced deep his heart and shining bright in the dark night disappered in the stars 'सा तां मायां भस्म कृत्वा ज्वलन्ती भित्वा गाढं हृदयं राक्षसस्य | ऊर्ध्वं ययौ दीप्यमाना निशायां नक्षत्राणामन्तराण्याविवेश ||'. Seeing him dead, *Kauaravs* become happy and thank *Karna* for this great deed.

But *Yudhishthira* becomes depressed in mind, having lost *Ghatotkacha* so soon after *Abhimanyu's* death. But *Krishna* appeared to be happy and dancing with abandon and blowing his conch in great jubilation. Seeing this strange, indecent and unseemly exultation when it was for *Pandavas* a moment for lamentation 'वासुदेवस्तु हर्षेण महताभिपरिप्लुतः | ननाद सिंहनादं वै पार्यष्वजत फाल्गुनम्||..ननर्त हर्षसंवितो वातोद्धूत इव द्रुमः ||..प्रहृष्टमनसं ज्ञात्वा वासुदेवं महाबलः | अर्जुनोऽथब्रवीद्राजन्नतिहृष्टमना इव || अतिहर्षोऽयमस्थाने तवाद्य मधुसूदन शोकस्थाने तु सम्प्राप्ते हैडिम्बस्य वधेन तु || विमुखानिव सैन्यानि हतं दृष्ट्वा घटोत्कचम्| वयं च भृशमुद्विग्ना हैडिम्बेस्तु निपातवान्|| यद्येतन्न रहस्यं ते वक्तुमर्हस्यरिंदम | धैर्यस्य वैकृतं ब्रूहि त्वमद्य मधुसूदन || समुद्रस्येव संक्षेपं मेरोरिव विसर्पणम्| तथैतदद्य मन्येऽहं तव कर्म जनार्दन ||'. *Krishna* then explains that with his death, *Karna* has also lost the immense energy provided to him by *Indra.* Possessed of that weapon, neither *Krishna's* discus nor *Arjuna's Gandeeva* could have defeated *Karna* and now that he is divested of this weapon, and deprived of his armour and ear-rings, he is no better than any other skilled warrior 'अतिहर्षमिमं प्राप्तं श्रुणु मे त्वं धनंजय | अतीव मनसः सद्यः प्रसादकरमुत्तमम्|| शक्तिं घटोत्कचेनेमां व्यंसयित्वा महाद्युते | कर्णं निहतमेवाजौ विद्धि सद्यो धनंजय || दिष्ट्यापनीतकवचो दिष्ट्यापहृतकुण्डलः | दिष्ट्या सा व्यंसिता शक्तिरमोघास्य घटोत्कचे ||..गाण्डीवमुद्यम्य भवांश्चक्रं चाहं सुदर्शनम्| न शक्तौ स्वो रणे जेतुं तथायुक्तं नरर्षभम्|| त्वद्धितार्थं तु शक्रेण मयापहृतकुण्डलः | विहीनकवचश्चायं कृतः परपुरंजयः || उत्कृत्य कवचं यस्मात्कुण्डले विमले च ते | प्रादाच्छक्राय कर्णो वै तेन वैकर्तनः स्मृतः || यदाप्रभृति कर्णाय शक्तिर्दत्ता महात्मना | वासवेन महाबाहो क्षिप्ता यासौ घटोत्कचे || कुण्डलाभ्यां निमायाथ दिव्येन कवचेन च | तां प्राप्यामान्यत वृषः सततं त्वां हतं रणे ||..कवचेन विहीनश्च कुण्डलाभ्यां च पाण्डव | सोऽद्य मानुषतां प्राप्तो विमुक्तः शक्रदत्तया ||'.

Then *Krishna* significantly brings out the reason why he descends establishing himself in gross forms of nature for fulfilling the *divine intent* and *purpose* for establishing *Dharma* and destruction of the evil either taking upon himself in whatever form he may appear or using various forms, both animate and inanimate as instruments. If *Ekalavya*, *Jarasandha* and *Shishupala* were not killed earlier then they would have strengthened *Duryodhana* in this war. Therefore, *Shishupala* was killed by none other *Krishna* than himself, whereas he got *Ekalavya's* power robbed making *Drona* the instrument, *Jarasandha*, *Hidimba*, *Baka* and some others killed making *Bhima* the instrument, *Alambusha* was killed making *Ghatotkacha* the instrument and for *Gahtotkacha's* death *Karna* became

the instrument.

Then with a great candour *Krishna* unravels the mystery behind *Ghatotkacha's* death that if *Ghatotkacha* was not killed by *Karna* then he himself would have to kill him since *Ghatotkacha* was a *rakshasa*, who despised *Brahmins* and sacrifices, therefore needed to be killed. If he himself had killed earlier then *Pandavas* would have been displeased. Therefore, he used *Karna* as the instrument for eliminating *Ghatotkacha* from the scene 'हतस्त्वयैव मायावी हैडिम्बेनाप्यलायुधः || हैडिम्बश्चाप्युपायेन शक्त्या कर्णेन घातितः | यदि ह्येनं नाहनिष्यत्कर्णः शक्त्या महामृधे || मया वध्योऽभविष्यत्स भैमसेनिर्घटोत्कचः | मया न निहतः पूर्वमेव युष्मत्प्रियेप्सया || एष हि ब्राह्मणद्वेषी यज्ञद्वेषी च राक्षसः | धर्मस्य लोप्ता पापात्मा तस्मादेव निपातितः ||'.

Here *Krishna's* descent comes out to be demonstrated not as an ordinary event but a special and significant one for establishing *Dharma* and destruction of the evil, in whatever form they may appear, either among his own or making some others. If *Ekalavya*, *Jarasandha* and *Shishupala* were not killed earlier then they would have strengthened *Duryodhana* in this war. While *Ekalavya's* power was robbed making *Drona* the instrument, *Jarasandha*, *Hidimba*, *Baka* and some others killed through *Bhima*, *Shishupala* having to be killed by none other than himself. To kill *Alambusha*, he used *Ghatotkacha* and for *Gahtotkacha, Karna.* Therefore, *Arjuna* need not now worry about *Karna*; since his death will also come at the proper time. *Duryodhana* too will die with *Bhima* as the instrument. Therefore, cease think on these events now and concentrate on *Drona*, fast approaching towards him - 'जरासन्धश्चेदिराजो नैषादिश्च महाबलः | यदि स्युर्न हताः पूर्वमिदानीं स्युर्भयंकराः || ते हि वीरा महेष्वासाः कृतास्त्रा दृढयोधिनः | धार्तराष्ट्रं चमूं कृत्स्नां रक्षेयुरमरा इव || सूतपुत्रो जरासन्धश्चेदिराजो निषादजः | सुयोधनं समाश्रित्य जयेयुः पृथिवीमिमाम्||...वधार्थं तस्य कौन्तेय जरासन्धस्य च सुरद्विषाम्|| त्वत्सहायो नरव्याघ्र लोकानां हितकाम्यया | हतस्त्वयैव मायावी हैडिम्बेनाप्यलायुधः || हैडिम्बश्चाप्युपायेन शक्त्या कर्णेन घातितः | यदि ह्येनं नाहनिष्यत्कर्णः शक्त्या महामृधे || मया वध्योऽभविष्यत्स भैमसेनिर्घटोत्कचः | मया न निहतः पूर्वमेष युष्मत्प्रियेप्सया || एष हि ब्राह्मणद्वेषी यज्ञद्वेषी च राक्षसः | धर्मस्य लोप्ता पापात्मा तस्मादेष निपातितः ||..धर्मसंस्थापनार्थं हि प्रतिज्ञैषा ममाव्यया | ब्रह्म सत्यं दमः शौचं धर्मो ह्रीः श्रीधृतिः क्षमा || यत्र तत्र रमे नित्यमहं सत्येन ते शपे |'.

Karna having killed *Ghatotkacha*, though the immediate danger to *Kauravas* was eliminated, the danger from *Arjuna* remained to weigh heavy on their mind. *Dhritarashtra* too wonders why *Karna* did not use *Vaijayanti* weapon earlier when *Arjuna* challenged him. In that case the war would have ended soon. It is true that his son was foolish that he did not insist on this step. As *Sanjaya* puts it, the battle was between a boar and a dog where the advantage would always be to the hunter 'यथा वराहस्य शुनश्च युध्यतोस्तयोरभावे श्वपचस्य लाभः | मन्ये विद्वन्वासुदेवस्य तद्वद्युद्धे लाभः कर्णहैडिम्बयोर्वै || घटोत्कचो यदि हन्याद्धि कर्णं परो लाभः स भवेत्पाण्डवानाम्| वैकर्तनो वा यदि तं निहन्यात्तथापि कृत्यं शक्तिनाशात्कृतं स्यात्||'. Therefore, *Krishna* should be considered shrewd that by putting *Karna* against *Ghatotkacha*, he having known that *Karna* wanted to kill *Arjuna*, saw that the extra-ordinary power was destroyed so that *Pandavas* were the beneficiaries 'एतच्चिकीर्षितं ज्ञात्वा कर्णस्य मधुसूदनः | नियोजयामास तथा द्वैरथे राक्षसेश्वरम्|| घटोत्कचं महावीर्यं महाबुद्धिर्जनार्दनः | अमोघाया विघातार्थं राजन्दुर्मन्त्रिते तव ||'.

Sanjaya says that *Duryodhana*, *Dushasana*, *Shakuni* in their secret discussions previous night to prevail upon *Karna* to use the powerful weapon on no one else than on *Arjuna* but on the following day *Karna* will forget the same and waste his energy on others. *Sanjya* says that without doubt the divine will alone is guiding the turn of events that in spite of the powerful weapon in hand *Karna* never used the same on *Arjuna* and *Krishna* 'संग्रामाद्विनिवृत्तानां सर्वेषां नो विशाम्पते | रात्रौ कुरुकुलश्रेष्ठ मन्त्रोऽयं समजायत || प्रभातसमये श्वोभूते केशवायार्जुनाय वा | शक्तिरेषा हि मोक्तव्या कर्ण कार्णेति नित्यशः || ततः प्रभातसमये राजन्कर्णस्य दैवतैः | अन्येषां चैव योधानां सा बुद्धिर्नश्यते पुनः || दैवमेव परं मन्ये यत्कर्णो हस्तसंस्थया | न जघान रणे पार्थं कृष्णं वा देवकीसुतम्||'.

If *Krishna* comes in between then even he should be killed because but for his protection to *Arjuna* from *Karna*, *Kauravas* would have been successful by now. Even *Satyaki* wondered seeing *Karna* not use his power against *Arjuna*. Even *Karna* had agreed to that suggestion. But whenever he saw *Arjuna* in front of him, he would be under delusion and forget whatever was decided earlier. *Krishna* always protected *Arjuna* from *Karna* and would never allow him to come in his presence. He is used to send other warriors to fight *Karna* so that his strength may thereby me decreased. When *Krishna* is thus protecting *Arjuna* from *Karna* should he not have protected himself from danger? Now *Arjuna* is

afe and there was nothing in the three worlds which he considers equal to having him by his side *rishna* alone is the root, *Arjuna* being he branch and other *Pandavas* and *Panchalas* being the leaves. *rishna* has been to the *Pandavas* like the moon is to the stars, Therefore, instead of cutting the branches nd the leaves, the proper thing would be cut the root itself. - 'कृष्णो हि मूलं पाण्डूनां पार्थः स्कन्ध इवोद्गतः | शाखा इवेतरे पार्थाः ञ्चालाः पत्रसंज्ञिताः || कृष्णाश्रयाः कृष्णबलाः कृष्णनाथाश्च पाण्डवाः | कृष्णः परायणं चैषां ज्योतिषामिव चन्द्रमाः || तस्मात्पर्णानि शाखाश्च स्कन्धं चोत्सृज्य नज | कृष्णं हि विद्धि पाण्डूनां मूलं सर्वत्र सर्वदा || हन्यद्यदि हि दाशार्हं कर्णो यादवनन्दनम्| कृत्स्ना वसुमती राजन्वशे तस्य न संशयः || सा तु वद्भिः कृताप्ययं ार्गति त्रिदशेश्वरं | अप्रमेयं हृषीकेशो युद्धकालेऽप्यमुह्यत || अन्यांश्चास्मै रथोदारानुपास्थापयदच्युतः | ओघं तां कथं शक्तिं मोघां कुर्यामिति प्रभो ||'.

Sanjaya declares that दैव is difficult to circumvent, seeing that *Karna* even possessing a great ower could not use it - 'दैवमेव परं मन्ये यत्कर्णो हस्तसंस्थया | न जघान रणे पार्थं कृष्णं वा देवकीसुताम्|| तस्य हस्तस्थिता शक्तिः कालरात्रिरिवोद्यता | वोपहतबुद्धित्वान्न तां कर्णो विमुक्तवान्|| कृष्णे वा देवकीपुत्रे मोहितो देवमायया | पार्थे वा शक्रकल्पे वै वधार्थं वासवीं प्रभो ||. *Dhritarashtra* also elplessly laments that due to दैव alone were *Kauravas* thwarted, *Krishna* having made the weapon given o *Karna* being used for killing *Ghatotkacha* instead of *Arjuna* - 'दैवेनोपहता यूयं स्वबुद्धया केशवस्य च | गता हि वासवी हत्वा णभूतं घटोत्कचम्|| कर्णश्च मम पुत्रश्च सर्वे चान्ये च पार्थिवाः | तेन वै दुष्प्रणीतेन गता वैवस्वतक्षयम्||'. Extermination of *Ghatotkacha* by *Karna* becomes the turning point in *Kurukshetra* war and an opportunity for *Krishna* to clarify, even he ad told even before the *Kurukshetra* battle had begun 'मयैवैते निहताः पूर्वमेव निमित्तमात्रं भव सव्यसाचिन्|| द्रोणं च भीष्मं च यद्रथं च कर्णं तथान्यानपि योधवीरान्|' and later to *Uttanka Bhargava,* how he conducts his role comprehensively and xtensively as the *Krishna-Consciousness* in the manner suited to the human form, not only through eroic and positive forces like *Pandavas* but also through negative forces like *Karna* and *Ghatotkacha* s instruments for fulfilling the *divine* intent and purpose.

Arjuna's safety, however, did not bring consolation to *Yudhishthira* who was exceedingly nhappy and depressed, 'हैडिम्बस्यैव घातेन मोहो मामाविशन्महान्||' even though *Krishna* consoles him as a brave erson to give wrong signals to his soldiers 'वैक्लव्यं भरतश्रेष्ठ यथा प्राकृतपूरुषे || उत्तिष्ठ राजन्युद्ध्यस्व वह गुर्वी धुरं विभो || त्वयि कल्यमापन्ने संशयो विजये भवेत्|'. *Yudhishthira* wonders what righteousness could there be when one has to suffer for the faults of others , *Abhimanyu* dies because of *Drona's* battle formation while it is *Jayadratha* who omes to be punished. When *Karna* and *Drona* should have died, it is hapless *Jayadratha* who is made o die. The proper persons to be killed would have been *Karna* and *Dorna* 'विदिता मे महाबाहो धर्माणां परमं गतिः || ह्महत्या फलं तस्य यैः कृतं नावबुध्यते |.. निरुद्धाश्च वयं सैन्धवेन दुरात्मना | निमित्तमभवत् द्रोणः सपुत्रस्तात्र कर्मणि || अल्पे च कारणं कृष्ण हतो गाण्डीवधन्वना || न्धवो यादवश्रेष्ठ तच्च नातिप्रियं मम | यदि शत्रुवधो न्याय्यो भवेत्कर्तुं हि पाण्डवैः || कर्णद्रोणौ रणे पूर्वं हन्तव्याविति मे मतिः || यत्र वध्यो भवेद्द्रोणः सूतपुत्रश्च ानुगः | तत्रावधीन्महाबाहुः सैन्धवं दूरवासिनम्||'. *Krishna* appreciates *Yudhishthira* feelings but does not hesitate to bring im back to realities of life. But seeing *Yudhishthira* hurry to battle saying that he will himself take on *Karna*, *Krishna* tells *Arjuna* that *Yudhishthira* is disturbed and desires to fight *Karna* himself and he is ot to be left alone in such circumstances. 'एष प्रयाति त्वरितः क्रोधाविष्टो युधिष्ठिरः | जिघांसु सूतपुत्रस्य नास्योपेक्ष न युज्यते ||'. Seeing *Yudhishthira* agitated, *Vyasa* arrives there and advises him that it is his good fortune that *Arjuna* is alive o kill *Karna,* since the weapon which *Karna* has preserved is no more. It was *divine intent* that killed *Ghatotkacha* in the battle. Therefore, he should engage himself to destroy *Kauravas* and success will surely be theirs within five days 'कर्णमासाद्य संग्रामे दिष्ट्या जीवति फाल्गुनः || सव्यसाचिवधाकांक्षी शक्तिं रक्षितवान्हि सः ||..दिष्ट्या रक्षो हतं युद्धे सूतपुत्रेन मानद | वासवीं कारणं कृत्वा कालेनोपहतो ह्यसौ ||.. कौरवान्समरे राजन् प्रतियुध्यस्व भारत | पञ्चमे दिवसे तात पृथिवी ते भविष्यति ||'.

After *Ghatotkacha's* death, the attention shifts to *Drona, Yudhishthira* encouraging *Drishtadhyumna* to take on *Drona,* since born from the sacrificial fire he is endowed with powerful weapons - 'त्वं हि द्रोणविनाशाय समुत्पन्ने हुताशनात्| सशरः कवचं खड्गी धन्वी च परतापन ||'. Here among *Kauravas*, realizing *Karna's* great error in using the divine weapon on *Ghatotkacha* instead on *Arjuna* unnerves them, *Duryodhana* promptly going to *Drona* to tell that since he has completely lost confidence - 'सर्वथा परिहीनाः स्म तेजसा च बलेन च | भवता पाल्यमानास्ते विवर्धन्ते पुनः पुनः ||' *Drona* should take his own responsibility with all seriousness since he alone is equipped with divine weapons and *Pandavas* are afraid of him, though they are his favourites disciples. His only regret is that his words do not seem to have any influence on *Drona* 'सर्वथा परिहीनाः स्म तेजसा च बलेन च | भावता पाल्यमानास्ते विवर्धन्ते पुनस्ते पुनः || दिव्यास्त्राणि सर्वाणि ब्राह्मादीनि च यानि ह | तानि सर्वाणि तिष्ठन्ति भवत्येव विशेषतः

|| स भावान्मर्षायत्येतांस्त्वत्तो भीतान्विशेषतः | शिष्यत्वं वा पुरस्कृत्य मम वा मन्दभाग्यताम्||'.

Drona, feels slighted and hurt by *Duryodhana's* words, protesting that he has earlier appraised the difficulty to defeat *Arjuna,* besides himself being old. Even then he has been fighting for his sake, even performing noble or ignoble tasks, and unrighteous acts using his divine weapons. However, it is not correct to assume that *Arjuna* is now tired and could be easily defeated and killed - 'स्थविरः सन्परं शक्त्या घटे दुर्योधनाहवे |... अनस्त्रविदयं सर्वो हन्तव्योऽस्त्रविदा जनः | यद्भवान्मन्यते चापि शुभं वा यदि वाशुभम्|| तद वै कर्तास्मि कौरव्य वचनात्तव नान्यथा |..मन्यसे यच्च कौन्तेयमर्जुनं श्रान्तमाहवे || तस्य वीर्यं महाबाहो शृणु सत्येन कौरव | तं न देवा न गन्धर्वा न यक्षा न च राक्षसाः || उत्सहन्ते रणे जेतुं कुपितं सव्यसाचिनम्|'.

Peeved by *Duryodhana's* words, *Drona* tells him again to come down on the battle field and kill *Arjuna* himself, since he too is born in a noble family and have equal capability to fight any enemy. Having started the enmity, why should he and his uncle, expert in throwing dice and full of astuteness, deceit and deception, not take on *Arjuna's* might! Surely they will defeat *Arjuna* in the battle as they did during the game of dice as he himself used to boast that he along with *Dushasana* and *Karna* alone would win the entire War. Why should he not prove that claim now 'गच्छ त्वमपि कौन्तेयमात्मार्थे जहि मा चिरम्|| त्वमप्याशंससे योद्धुं कुलजः क्षत्रियो ह्यसि | इमान्किं क्षत्रियान्सर्वान्घातयिष्यस्यनागसः || त्वमस्य मूलं वैरस्य तस्मादासादयार्जुनम्| एष ते मातुलः प्राज्ञः क्षत्रधर्ममनुव्रतः || दुर्द्यूतदेवी गान्धारे प्रयात्वर्जुनमाहवे | एषोऽक्षकुशलो जिह्मो द्यूतकृत्कितवः शठः || देविता निकृतिप्रज्ञो युधि जेष्यति पाण्डवान्| त्वया कथितमत्यर्थं कर्णेन सह हृष्टवत्||.. अहं च तात कर्णश्च भ्राता दुःशासनश्च मे || पाण्डुपुत्रान् हनिष्यामः सहिता समरे त्रयः | इति ते कत्थमानस्य श्रुतं संसदि संसदि || अनुतिष्ठ प्रतिज्ञां तां सत्यवाग्भव तैः सह | एष ते पाण्डवः शत्रुरविशङ्कोऽग्रतः स्थितः || क्षत्रधर्मामवेक्षस्व श्लाघ्यस्तव वधो जयात्||'. Saying thus *Drona* leaves him to go to other side of the battle field.

Seeing *Drona* come on the field, *Bhima* remarks that the purpose for which warriors are born has now come 'अर्जुनार्जुन बीभत्सो शृणुष्वेतद्वचो मम | यदर्थं क्षत्रिया सूते तस्य कालोऽयमागतः ||' and encouraged by *Bhima* and *Krishna*, *Arjuna* challenges *Drona* with full force, the *Brahmin*-warrior shining like blazing fire 'भ्राजमानं श्रिया युक्तं ज्वलन्तीव तेजसा |'. He kills both *Drupada* and *Virata* with extra-ordinary courage. *Drishtadhyumna* who sees this vows to kill *Drona* 'द्रोणस्य कर्म तद्दृष्ट्वा कोपदुःखसमन्वितः | शशाप रथिनां मध्ये धृष्टद्युम्नो महामनाः ||'. A great battle ensues between *Pandavas* and *Drona,* gods and seers from heavens wondering that this is not a battle between human beings nor of the *asuras*, *gandharvas* or even of the gods. It is a great eternal and supreme struggle never seen of heard earlier 'ब्राह्मं ध्रुवमिदं परम्' 'विचित्रमिदमाश्चर्यं न नो दृष्टं न च श्रुतम्'.

The battle sees many surprising twists and turns, every one wonderstruck seeing this great battle between the Teacher and his favourite disciple and sky filled with divine weapons,. Each weapon discharged by *Drona* was systematically struck down by *Arjuna*. Seeing this extra-ordinary display of archery, *Drona* cannot contain his pleasure applauding *Arjuna* mentally, even as gods and seers in space were declaring that this is surely the eternal and supreme play by the Supreme Being in human context, difficult to determine whether *Drona* or *Arjuna* is more superior - 'तथा द्रोणार्जुनौ चित्रमयुध्येतां महारथौ || आचार्यशिष्यौ राजेन्द्र कृतप्रहरणौ युधि || लघुसंधानयोगाभ्यां रथयोश्च रणेन च | मोहयन्तौ चक्षूंषि च मनांसि च ||..यद्यदस्त्रं स पार्थाय प्रयुङ्क्ते विजिगीषया | तस्य तस्य विघाताय तत्तद्धि कुरुतेऽर्जुनः || ततोऽन्तरिक्षे देवाश्च गन्धर्वाश्च सहस्रशः || ऋषयः सिद्धसंघाश्च व्यतिष्ठन्त दिदृक्षया |.. विसृज्यमानेष्वस्त्रेषु ज्वलयत्सु दिशो दश || अब्रुवंस्तत्र सिद्धाश्च ऋषयश्च समागताः | नैवेदं मानुषं युद्धं नासुरं न च राक्षसम्|| न दैवं न च गान्धर्वं ब्राह्मं ध्रुवमिदं परम्| विचित्रमिदमाश्चर्यं न नो दृष्टं न च श्रुतम्|| अति पाण्डवमाचार्यो द्रोणं चाप्यति पाण्डवः | नानयोरन्तरं शक्य द्रष्टुमन्येन केनचित्|| अति पाण्डवमाचार्यो द्रोणं चाप्यति पाण्डवः | नानयोरन्तरं शक्यं द्रष्टुमन्येन केनचित्||.

Kurukshetra war was one of the strangest wars ever fought by any persons, in any places or in any period. Unlike other places in India, wars are conceived as divine dispensation, *divine will* intervening to set temporal manifest world in proper balance, the warring *Kshatriyas* being merely the instruments of such dispensation, performing their tasks as ordained, winning and losing being subject to that *divine will*. A true soldier fights neither for greed nor for glory but as duty assigned in fulfillment *divine intent* and *purpose*. Therefore, one would not be surprised if friends fight friends, brothers fight brothers, cousins fight cousins, member of the same clan fight others of the same clan.

One such dramatic event is presented by *Vyasa* when *Satyaki* and *Duryodhana*, close friends in childhood, are arrayed to fight with each other. They fight with each even as they recollect and

:member the fun and frolic of the yester years, neither worrying nor lamenting but only wondering how ıte has brought them to fight like enemies. Nevertheless they fight with all sincerity even as fought on ıe playground, *Duryodhana* regretting his greed and reproaching क्षत्रधर्म, which gives rise to strangest of ıe situations - 'तं . . तौ . . कुरुमाधवौ | हसमानौ नृशार्दूलावभीतौ समसज्जताम्|| वाल्यवृत्तानि सर्वाणि पीयमाणौ विचिन्त्य नौ | अन्योन्यं प्रेक्षमाणौ च यमानौ पुनः पुनः || अथ दुर्योधनो राजा सत्यकि समभाषत | प्रियं सखायं सततं गर्हयन्वृत्तमात्मनः || धिक्क्रोधं धिक्सखे लोभं धिग्मोहं धिगमर्षितम्| धिगस्तु त्रमाचारं धिगस्तु बलमौरसम्|| यत्र मामभिसंधत्से त्वां चाहं शिनिपुङ्गव | त्वं हि प्राणैः प्रियतरो ममाहं च सदा तव || स्मरामि तानि सर्वाणि वाल्यवृत्तानि यानि नौ | तानि र्वाणि जीर्णानि साम्प्रतं नो रणाजिरे || किमन्यत्क्रोधलोभाभ्यां युद्धामेवाद्य सात्वत |'. Hearing *Duryodhana* thus remark, *Satyaki* laughs t the prospect of meeting neither in the royal assembly nor in the school play ground but here on the attle ground - 'नेयं सभा राजपुत्र नाचार्यस्य निवेशनम्|| यत्र क्रीडितमस्माभिस्तदा राजन्समागतः |'. *Duryodhana* wonders where their hildhood has fled and how has this war arrived, surely mysterious are the ways of one's destiny - 'क्व सा ीडा गतास्माकं वाल्ये वै शिनिपुङ्गव | क्व च युद्धमिदं भुयः काले हि दुर्गतिक्रमः || किं नु नो विद्यते कृत्यं धनेन धनलिप्सया | यत्र युध्यामहे सर्वे नलोभात्समागताः ||'.

The distinguishing feature of *Mahabharata* is the subtle display of variety of emotions - love nd hate, friendship and enmity, desires and dejections, attachment and aversions. *Satyaki* says that it is xpected of a warrior that he should fight even with his own preceptor if and when he confronts him. herefore, if *Duryodhana* loves him then it would, indeed, be his duty to kill him in the battle, even as it vould be *Satyaaki's* duty to kill him, a dear friend 'एवंवृत्तं सदा क्षात्रं युध्यन्तीह गुरूनपि | यदि तेऽहं प्रियो राजन्जहि मां मा चिरं ृथाः ||'. Before *Dharma* every relationship has to be made subservient and surrendered, not the body but he soul within deciding the actions to be performed. Since both love and respect wach other, they do ıot desire the other to fail in his क्षत्रधर्म.

For *Vyasa* emotions are not the ultimate goals but eternal truth and righteousness धर्म is. herefore, *Abhimanyu's* and *Ghatotkacha's* lives become oblation offered in the universal sacrifice for ulfilling the *divine intent and purpose.* Therefore, *Bhishma* and *Drona* are not apologetic for the tasks ıssigned to them nor *Krishna* and *Arjuna* planning their down fall. When *Drona* engages *Panchalas*, his ight was as heroic as was *Indra's* with the *danavas*, 'पाञ्चालानां ततो द्रौणोऽप्यकरोत्कदनं महत्| यथा क्रुद्धो रणे शक्रो दानवानां क्षयं ुरा ||'. He was sure that no one capable of fight with him and *Arjuna* would challenge him 'न चैनं संयुगे कश्चित्समर्थः प्रतिवीक्षितुम्| न चैनमर्जुनो जातु प्रतियुध्येत धर्मवित्||'. *Krishna* also tells *Arjuna* that no one is capable of killing ıim unless he himself lays down his weapons - 'नैष युद्धे न संग्रामे जेतुं शक्यः कथञ्चन | सधनुर्धन्विनां श्रेष्ठो देवैरपि सवासवैः || यस्तशस्त्रस्तु संग्रामे शक्यो हन्तुं भवेन्नृभिः | आस्थीयतां जये योगो धर्ममुत्सर्ज्य पाण्डवाः ||'. Therefore, he uses news of *Ashvatthama's* leath as the pretext to disturb *Drona's* mind, though neither *Arjuna* nor *Yudhshthira* keen to accept the suggestion.

Krishna convinces *Bhima* to kills an elephant named *Ashvatthama* and conveys to *Drona* the ıews that he has killed *Ashvatthama* - 'अश्वत्थाम्नि हते नैय युध्येदिति मतिर्मम || तं हतं संयुगे कश्चिदस्मै शंसतु मानवः | एतन्नारोचयद्राजन्कुन्तीपुत्रो धनंजयः || अन्ये त्वरोचयन् सर्वे कृच्छ्रेण तु युधिष्ठिरः | ततो भीमो महाबाहुरनिके स्वे महागजम्||..भीमसनस्तु सव्रीडमुपेत्य द्रोणमाहवे | अश्वत्थामा हत इति शब्दमुच्चैश्चकार ह ||. *Drona* though stunned and disturbed to hear the news, continues to fight not believing *Bhima* and confident of his son's courage, 'भीमसेनवचः श्रुत्वा द्रोणस्तत्परमाप्रियम्| मनसा सन्नगात्रोऽभूद्यथा सैकतमम्भसि || शङ्कमानः स तन्मिथ्या वीर्यज्ञः स्वसुतस्य वै | हतः स इति च श्रुत्वा नैव धैर्यादकम्पत ||'. At this stage, knowing the time of departure of the great *Brahmin* preceptor has come, great seers with *Agni* in the forefront approach *Drona* in their subtle forms to prevail upon *Drona* to lay down his weapons, since innocent lives are lost due to his action, unworthy for one who is wise in the *vedic* wisdom 'अधर्मतः कृतं युद्धं समयो निधनस्य ते || न्यस्यायुधं रणे द्रोण समीक्षास्मानवस्थितान्| नातः क्रूरतरं कर्म पुनः कर्तुमिहार्हसि || वेदवेदाङ्गविदुषः सत्यधर्मरतस्य ते | ब्राह्मणस्य विशेषेण तवैतन्नोपपद्यते || ब्रह्मास्त्रेण त्वया दग्धा अनस्त्रज्ञा नरा भुवि | यदेतदीदृशं विप्र कृतं कर्म न साधु तत् || न्यस्यायुधं रणे विप्र द्रोण मा त्वं चिरं कृथाः | मा पापिष्ठतरं कर्म करिष्यसि पुनर्द्विज ||'.

Seeing *Drishtadhyumna* very much near him, *Drona* realizes that the time, indeed has come for him to give up his body. He turns to *Yudhishthira* nearby, known as truthful whether the news is true. *Yudhishthira* hesitates but remembers *Krishna's* cautious advice that if an angry *Drona* fights for half day his entire army will be destroyed. Therefore, to save them speaking untruth is better than telling

truth and would be considered commendable 'यद्यर्धदिवसं द्रोणो युध्यते मन्युमास्थितः | सत्यं ब्रवीमि ते सेनां विनाशं समुपैष्यति || स भवांस्त्रातु नो द्रोणात्सत्याज्ज्यायोऽनृतं वचः | अनृतं जीवितस्यार्थे वदान्न स्पृश्यतेऽनृतैः ||'. *Bhima* implores him saying his own words were not accepted by *Drona* as truth, therefore, only he can be their saviour. Thus prompted, reluctantly *Yudhishthira* announces *Ashvatthama is dead* and then mumbling softly adds the words, *it is the elephant that is dead* 'तमतथ्यभये मग्नो जये सक्तो युधिष्ठिरः | अश्वत्थामा हत इति शब्दमुच्चैश्चकार ह | अव्यक्तमब्रवीद्राजन्हतः कुञ्जर इत्युत ||'. *Sanjaya* says that earlier *Yudhishthira's* moral standing was so high that his chariot never touched the ground even by four measures, but once he spoke those words, his chariot landed down on the ground - 'तस्य पूर्वं रथः पृथ्व्याश्चतुरङ्गुलमुच्छ्रितः | बभूवैवं च तेनोक्ते तस्य वाहाः स्पृशन्महीम्||'.

Hearing the words spoken by *Yudhishthira*, *Drona* becomes despondent, his strength weak and listless, unable to fight as earlier. Seeing *Drishtadhyumna* in front of him he shoots *Brahmastra* shattering his chariot. *Bhima* gives *Drishtadhyumna* shelter in his own chariot and seeing him hurt he becomes angry and shouts at his Teacher, as a *Brahmin* who had taken to warfare contrary to his on ordained duties and if it were not so such slaughter of *Kshatriyas* would not have resulted. A *Brahmin* is said to be the foundation of a society but *Drona* though a man of wisdom, desiring woman, wealth and progeny like a foolish person, has brought great shame to *brahmannical class*, - 'यदि नाम न युध्येरञ्शिक्षिता ब्रह्मबान्धवाः | स्वकर्मभिरसंतुष्टा न स्म क्षत्रं क्षयं व्रजेत्|| अहिंसा सर्वभूतेषु धर्मं ज्यायस्तरं विदुः | तस्य च ब्राह्मणो मूलं भवांश्च ब्रह्मवित्तमः ||..एकस्यार्थे बहून् हत्वा पुत्रस्याधर्मविदुषा | स्वकर्मस्थान्विकर्मस्थो न व्यपत्रपसे कथम्||'.

Drona despairs hearing these harsh words and throws down his bow and other weapons, calling upon *Karna*, *Kripa* and *Duryodhana* to carry on the battle, since he is relinquishing his charge 'कर्ण कर्ण महेष्वास कृप दुर्योधनेति च || संग्रामे क्रियतां यत्नो ब्रवीम्येष पुनः पुनः | पाण्डवेभ्यः शिवं वोऽस्तु शस्त्रमभ्युत्सृजाम्यहम्|'. Then loudly lamenting *Ashvatthama's* death, he rushes to the rear side of his chariot, sits in yogic posture ready for deserting his body. Seizing this opportunity, *Drishtadhyumna* jumps from his chariot and rushes to him with sword in hand, even as the assembled soldiers express horror censuring *fie on him, fie on him* that he is going to kill *Drona* who has relinquished his weapons. At that time, *Drona* was seen ready to depart to the eternal world uttering ॐ and meditating on *Vishnu* with equanimity of intellect समाधि.

Drishtadhyumna, however, was so revengeful that he remained defiant seeing *Drona's* body full of blood. He pushed it aside and even as breath was slowly passing through the body and even as *Arjuna* was seen shouting *bring him alive, bring him alive* even as Kauravas were screaming *don't kill him, don't kill him* 'न हन्तव्यो न हन्तव्य इति ते सर्वतोऽब्रुवन्| तथैव चार्जुनो वाहादवरुह्यैनमाद्रवत् || उद्यम्य त्वरितो बाहुं ब्रुवाणश्च पुनः पुनः | जीवन्तमानयाचार्यं मा वधीरिति धर्मवित्||', he severs his head and holding it by tresses started dancing around. Soon every one experiences see him fully integrated in self but no one else could see it disappear in the heavens except *Arjuna*, *Kripa*, *Krishna*, *Yudhishthira* and *Sanjaya*. *Sanjaya* concludes the narration saying that with the grace of *Vyasa* he could see *Drona's* divine death and his ascent to the stars 'द्रोणस्य दिवमास्थाय नक्षत्रपथमाविशन्| अहमेव तदाद्राक्षं द्रोणस्य निधनं नृप || ऋषेः प्रसादात्कृष्णस्य सत्यवत्याः सुतस्य नृप |'.

Chapter XI

Drona's death placed *Kauravas* in further state of despondency and especially *Ashvatthama* ho laments that his father was killed deceitfully - 'छद्मना निहतं श्रुत्वा पितरं पापकर्मणा | बाष्पोणपूर्यत द्रौणी रोषेण च नरर्षभ ||'. owever he consoled himself saying that his father died on the battle filed and has without slightest oubts reached the heavens 'न्यायवृत्तो वधो यस्तु संगामे युध्यतो भवेत्|| न स दुःखाय भवति तथा दृष्टो हि स द्विजैः | गतः स वीरलोकाय पिता मम संशयः || न शोच्यः पुरुषव्याघ्र यस्तदा निधनं गतः |'. But when his father comes to be humiliated in the presence of his oldiers, he laments which father would ever wish to have sons - 'मयि जीवति यत्तातः केशग्रहमवाप्तवान्|| कथमन्ये करिष्यन्ति पुत्रेभ्यः पुत्रिणः स्पृहाम्|'. But he was exceedingly troubled by the manner of his death deceptively by *Drishtadhyumna* and the trickery played by *Pandavas.* Therefore he will not only avenge the death of is father by killing *Drishtadhyumna* but also *Yudhishthira* who spoke untruth making his father lay own to suffer. Fie be on क्षत्रधर्म and fie of the divine weapons. *Pandavas* will surely see his valor on the attle field - 'अवज्ञाय च मां नूनं नृशंसेन दुरात्मना | तस्यानुबन्धं द्रष्टासौ धृष्टद्युम्नः सुदारुणम्|| अकार्यं परमं कृत्वा मिथ्यावादी च पाण्डवः | योऽसौ छद्मनाऽऽचार्यं शस्त्रं संन्यासयत्तदा || तस्याद्य धर्मराजस्य भूमिः पास्यति शोणितम्|... धृष्टद्युम्नं च समरे हन्ताहं पापकारिणम्| कर्मणा येन तेनेह मृदुना दारुणेन च || पञ्चालानां वधं कृत्वा शान्तिं लब्धास्मि कौरव |..धिङ्ममास्त्राणि दिव्यानि धिग्बाहू धिक्पराक्रमम्|| यं स्म द्रोणः सुतं प्राप्य केशग्रहमवाप्तवान्| अद्य पश्यन्तु मे वीर्यं पाण्डवाः सजनार्दनः || मृद्नतः सर्वसैन्यानि युगान्तमिव कुर्वतः ||'.

Then in an extra-ordinary display of misplaced humility he declares that even though he does not desire to boast, there are no other comparable warriors in the whole world except for *Arjuna* and himself. Therefore, he will use such rare weapon which neither *Krishna* nor any of the *Pandavas* are aware, let alone *Drishtadhyumna* or *Satyaki* -'धिङ्ममास्त्राणि दिव्यानि धिग्बाहू धिक्पराक्रमम्|| यं स्म द्रोणः सुतं प्राप्य केशग्रहमवाप्तवान्| आर्येण ह न वक्तव्या कदाचितात्स्तुतिरात्मनः || पितुर्वधममृष्यंस्तु वक्ष्याम्यद्येह पौरुषम्| अद्य पश्यन्तु मे वीर्यं पाण्डवाः सजनार्दनाः || मृद्नतः सर्वसैन्यानि युगान्तमिव कुर्वतः | न हि देवा न गन्धर्वा नासुरा न च राक्षसाः || अद्य शक्ता रणे जेतुं रथस्थं मां नरर्षभाः | मदन्यो नास्ति लोकेऽस्मिन्नर्जुनाद्वास्त्रवित् क्वचित्||'. Then he recalls that in olden days the resplendent Lord *Narayana* himself had granted a great weapon to *Drona* his father - 'नारायणाय मे पित्रा प्रणम्य विधिपूर्वकम् | उपहारः पुरा दत्तो ब्रह्मरूप उपेयतः || तं स्वयं प्रतिगृह्याथ भगवान्स वरं ददौ | ददौ पितामे परमस्त्रं नारायणं ततः ||', which handed over by *Drona* to him, with special instruction to use the same weapon only in special conditions or else it may return to kill him without killing the enemy - 'न त्विदं सहसा ब्रह्मन्प्रयोक्तव्यं कथंचन | न ह्येतदस्त्रमन्यत्र वधाच्छत्रोर्निवर्तते ||'. *Ashvatthama* is ready to use the same on *Pandavas, Panchalas, Kekayas* and *Matsyas* even as *Indra* did earlier to destroy *asuras*.

Arjuna informs *Yudhishthira* that *Ashvatthama* having seen his father killed in unrighteous manner may even use the *Brahsmastra* to punish *Drishtadhyumna* may even use the *Brahsmastra*, for having killed his father in unrighteous manner. It is also [possible that that *Yudhishthira's* renown too may be sullied even as *Dasharathi Rama's* reputation was sullied when he had shot *Vali* concealing himself 'चिरं स्थास्यति चाकीर्तिस्त्रैलोक्ये सचराचरे || रामे वालिवधात्यद्वदेवं द्रोणे निपातते ||'. He laments that when much of their life is already spent, their mind became obscured and they committed the great transgression. And for impermanent pleasures se have acquired great demerit killing one who was like a father to them and who reciprocated his feelings likewise. He had surely confidence that he being his favourite disciple will give up family and possessions for his sake. But he has failed to respect his wish hankering for temporal possessions. Surely he will go to the nether world 'यदा गतं वयो भूयः शिष्टमल्पतरं च नः | तस्येदानीं विकारोऽयमधर्मोऽयं कृतो महान्|| पितेव नित्यं सौहार्दात्पितेव हि च धर्मतः | सोल्पकालस्य राज्यस्य कारणाद्घातितो गुरुः ||... अहो बत महत् पापं कृतं कर्म सुदारुणम्| यद्राज्यसुखलोभेन द्रोणोऽयं साधु घातितः || पुत्रान्भ्रातॄन्पितॄन्दारान्जीवितं चैव वासविः | त्यजेत्सर्वं मम प्रेम्णा जानात्येवं हि मे गुरुः || स मया राज्यकामेन हन्यमानो ह्युपेक्षितः | तस्मादर्वाक्शिरा राजन्प्राप्तोऽस्मि नरकं प्रभो ||'.

Listening him speak thus, every one keeps quiet except *Bhima* who rebukes him saying only he who calls himself a *Kshatriya* endeavours for territory, righteousness and wealth, whereas *Arjuna* is

speaking like a foolish person though endowed with all qualities of a *Kshatriya*. Like *Indra* he is brave and like ocean should not transgress one's boundary. It is sad that in the very presence of *Krishna* he is praising *Drona* who is not even equal to him by sixteenth measure. Let *Arjuna* remain alone here with others and he himself will go and kill *Ashvatthama* instead 'क्षनत्राना क्षनान्जेवनक्षन्ना स्त्रीर्ष्वपि माधुपु | क्षत्रियः क्षितिमाप्नोति क्षिपं धर्मं यशः श्रियः || स भवानक्षत्रियगुणैर्युक्तः सर्वैः कुलद्विहाः | अविपश्चिद् यथा वाचं व्यावहरन्नाद्य शोभसे || पराक्रमस्ते कौन्तेय शक्रस्येव शचीपते | न चातिवर्तसे धर्मं वेलमिव महोदधिः ||..वासुदेवे स्थिते चापि द्रोणपुत्रं प्रशंससि | यः कलां पूर्णां धनंजय न तेऽर्हति ||..अथवा तिष्ठ बीभत्सो सह सर्वैः महोदरैः | अहमेव गदापाणिर्जेप्यामेको महाहवे ||'.

Drishtadhyumna too listening to this conversation objects why he should be accused for killing *Drona,* who having been a *brahmin* had had taken up *Kshatriya's* calling transgressing his *brahmannical* duties, when it should be unbearable for a *Brahmin* to kill using devious methods. He was keeping quiet only because *Draupadi*, his sister is married to *Arjuna*. Neither *Yudhishthira* is a liar nor unrighteous whereas *Drona* was fighting with his disciples and therefore he had to be killed - 'शैनेय विप्रकर्माणि विदितानि मनिषीणाम्| याजनाध्यापने दानं तथा यज्ञप्रतिग्रहौ || पष्ठमध्ययनं नाम तेषां कस्मिनप्रतिष्ठितः | हतो द्रोणो ध्रुवं किं मां पार्थ विगर्हसे अपक्रान्तः स्वधर्माच्च क्षात्रधर्मं व्यपाश्रितः | अमानुषेण हन्त्यस्मानस्त्रेण क्षुद्रकर्मकृत्|| तथा मायां प्रयुञ्जानमसह्यं ब्राह्मणब्रुवम्| माययैव विहन्यादयो न युक्तं पार्थ तत्र किम्||..क्षमामि ते सर्वमेव वाग्व्यतिक्रममर्जुन | द्रौपद्या द्रौपदेयानां कृते नान्येन हेतुना || कुलक्रमागतं वैरं ममाचार्येण विश्रुतम्| तथा जानात्ययं लोको न यूयं पाण्डुनन्दन | नानृति पाण्डवो ज्येष्ठो नहं वाधार्मिकोऽर्जुन | शिष्यद्रोही हतः पापो युध्यस्व विजयस्तव ||'. But *Satyaki* finds fault with *Drishtadhyumna* who losing his temper rushes to grapple with him by his throat, till *Bhima* cheers them saying that they should not be bitter with each other since both *Panchalas* and *Vrishnis* are dear to *Pandavas* 'अस्माकं पुरुषव्याघ्र मित्रमन्यन्न विद्यते || परमन्धकवृष्णिभ्यः पाञ्चालेभ्यश्च मारिष | तथैवान्धकवृष्णीनां तथैव च विशेषत || कृष्णस्य च तथास्मत्तो मित्रमन्यन्न विद्यते |.. स एवं सार्वधर्मज्ञ मित्रधर्ममनुस्मरन्|| नियच्छ मन्युं पाञ्चाल्यात्प्रशाम्य शिनिपुङगव | पार्षतस्य क्षम त्वं वै क्षमता पार्षतश्च ते | वयं क्षमयितारश्च किमन्यत्र शमादभवेत्'. War is dirty and despicable game where tempers are frayed giving rise to unpleasant outbursts & ill-will.

Ashvatthama was unrepentant, great stress obscuring his sense of dissemination and taking action with resolute decision. After sipping holy water he recollects to his mind the resplendent *Narayanastra* which soon becomes manifest with strong winds blowing, tempest sweeping the ocean, earth shaking and mountains trembling. Sun appeared dull, quarters became dark, heavenly inhabitants being concerned about the future and rulers become concerned and worried 'प्रादुश्चक्रे ततो द्रौणिरस्त्रं नारायणं तदा | अभिसंधाय पाण्डूनां पञ्चालानां च वाहिनीम्|| प्रादुरासंस्ततो बाणा दीप्ताग्राः खे सहस्रशः | पाण्डवान् क्षपयिष्यन्तो दीप्तास्याः पन्नगा इव || तेदिशः खं च सैन्यं च समावृण्वान्महाहवे | मुहुर्तादभास्करस्येव लोके रश्मयः || तथापरे द्योतमाना ज्योतींषीवामलाम्बरे | प्रादुरासन्महाराज कार्ष्णायसमया गुडाः || चतुश्चक्रा द्विचक्राश्च शतघ्नो बहुला गदाः | चक्राणि च क्षुरान्तानीव भास्वतः ||'. Seeing these portends, *Yudhishthira* ordered his soldiers to leave the battle field 'धृष्टद्युम्न पलायस्व सह पाञ्चालसेनया | सात्यके त्वं च गच्छस्व वृष्ण्यन्धकावृतो गृहान्|| वासुदेवोऽपि धर्मात्मा करिष्यत्यात्मनः क्षमम्| श्रेयो ह्यपदिशत्येप लोकस्य किमुतात्मनः || संग्रामस्तु न कर्तव्यः सर्वसैन्यान्ब्रवीमि वः |'. *Krishna* too advises them not to confront *Narayanastra* but respect it laying down their weapons. This is the only way it could be pacified 'शीघ्रं न्यस्यत शस्त्राणि वाहेभ्यश्चावरोहत | एष योगोऽत्र विहितः प्रतिघाते महात्मना || द्विपाश्वस्यन्दनेभ्यश्च क्षितिं सर्वेऽवरोहत | एवं मेतन्न वो हन्यादस्त्र भूमौ निरायुधान्||'.

However, *Bhima* refuses to comply and prevails *Arjuna* also not to do so declaring 'न कथंचन शस्त्राणि मोक्तव्यानीह केनचित्| अहमावारयिष्यामि द्रोणपुत्रास्त्रमाशुगैः || न हि विक्रमे तुल्यः कश्चिदस्ति पुमानिह | यथैव सवितुस्तुल्य ज्योतिरन्यन्न विद्यते || पश्यतेमौ हि मे बाहु नागराजकरोपमौ | समर्थौ पर्वतस्यापि शैशिरस्य निपातने ||..ज्वलमानस्य दीप्तस्य द्रोणेरस्त्रस्य वारणे || यदि नारायणस्त्रस्य प्रतियोद्धा न विद्यते | अर्धैतत्प्रतियोत्स्यामि पश्यत्सु कुरुपाण्डुपु || अर्जुनार्जुन बीभत्सो न न्यस्यं गाण्डीवं त्वया ऽ शशाङ्कस्येव ते पङ्को निर्मलं पातयिष्यति ||'.but *Arjuna* tells him of his vow not to confront a *Brahmin*, a cow and the *Narayana* weapon 'भीम नारायणास्त्रे मे गोषु च ब्राह्मणेषु च | एतेषु गान्डीवं न्यस्यमेतद्धि व्रतमुत्तमम्||' *Bhima,* however, does not heed his protestations and proceeds to confront *Narayanastra,* which then envelops him with a shower of arrows of diverse power and intensity. His entire body resembles a huge mountain enveloped by fire-flies. Every one became frightened but not so *Bhima,* who stood his stand. When all alighted from their chariots and laid down their weapons the entire strength of the weapon became concentrated on *Bhima*. The entire surrounding becomes terrified and in turmoil especially *Pandavas* 'ततो द्रौणि प्रहस्येतं दवन्तमभिभाष्य च | अवाकिरत्प्रदीप्ताग्रैः शरैस्तैरभिमन्त्रितैः || पन्नगैरिव दीप्तास्यैर्वमदभिर्ज्वलनं रणे | अवकीर्णोऽभवत्पार्थः स्फुल्लिङ्गैरिव काञ्चनैः || तस्य रूपमभूद्राजन्भीमसेनस्य संयुगे | खद्योतैरावृतस्येव पर्वतस्य दिनक्षये || विवर्ध

...रालक्ष्य तदस्त्र भीमविक्रमम्। पाण्डुसैन्यमृते भीमं सुमहद्भयमाविशत्।|...तेषु निक्षिप्तशस्त्रेषु वाहनेभ्यश्च्युतेषु च | तदस्त्रवीर्यं विपुलं भीममूर्धन्यथापतत्।। ...कृतानि भूतानि पाण्डवाश्च विशेषतः | भीमसेनमपश्यन्त तेजसा संवृतं तथा ||'.

Seeing *Bhima* thus in trouble, *Arjuna* uses his *Varuanastra* hiding its intensity 'भीमसेनं समाकीर्णं ...स्त्रेण धनंजयः | तेजसः प्रतिघातार्थं वारुणेना समावृणोत्।|'. But *Bhima's* chariot, horses and charioteer becoming ...veloped by the intensity of *Ashvatthama's* powerful weapon, that no one could see *Bhima* in the ...dst, the arrow shot from that weapon falling as stars would fall as the night recedes - 'साश्वसूतरथो भीमो ...द्रौणास्त्रसंवृतः | अहनावाग्निरिव व्यग्नो ज्वालामाली सुदुर्दृशः || यथा रात्रिक्षये राजञ्ज्योतींष्यस्ताचलं प्रति | समापेतुस्तथा बाणा भीमसेनरथं प्रति ||'. ...ishna and *Arjuna* jump down from their chariot and rush towards him and softened the effect of the ...eapon by pulling *Bhima* down from his chariot. When they placed his weapons down, *Narayanastra* ...comes pacified 'ततश्चकृषतुर्भीमं सर्वशस्त्रायुधानि च | नारायणशान्त्यर्थं नरनारायणौ बलात्।|' . But *Bhima* was still admanet to ...ght growling with a road, even as the *Narayanastra* became more intense in its power 'आकृष्यमाणः कौन्तेयो ...दैव महारवम्। वर्धते चैव तद्घोरं द्रौणेरस्त्रं सुदुर्जयम्।|'. *Krishna* was very upset and concerned with *Bhima's* rebellious ...titude urging him why did he not put down the weapons even after he was told and all other laid down ...eir weapons. If they could have won then they would not have laid down their weapon. Then *Krishna* ...lled *Bhima* down even as he was frowning with red eyes like a wounded serpent 'तमब्रवीद्वासुदेवः किमिदं ...ण्डुनन्दन | वार्यमाणोऽपि कौन्तेय यद्युद्धान्न निवर्तसे || यदि युद्धेन जेयाः स्युरिमे कौरवनन्दनाः | वयमप्यत्र युध्येम तथा चेमे नरर्षभाः ||.. एवमुक्त्वा तु तं कृष्णो ...द्भूमिमवर्तयत्। निश्वसन्तं यथा नागं क्रोधसंरक्तलोचनम्।। यदापकृष्टः स रथान्न्यासितश्चायुधं भुवि | ततो नारायणास्त्रं तत्प्रशान्तं शत्रुतापनम्।|'.

Duryodhana requests *Ashvatthama* thrilled to the core seeing the extra-ordinary influence of ...e weapon on *Pandavas* to use it again but he expresses his inability saying that once discharged it can ...either be withdrawn nor used again. If used for the second time, it recoils and destroys the one who uses ...imself - 'नैतदावर्तते राजन्नस्त्रं द्विर्नोपपद्यते | आवृत्तं हि निवर्तेत प्रयोक्तारं न संशयः || एष चास्त्रप्रतीघातं वासुदेवः प्रयुक्तवान्। अन्यथा विहितः संख्ये वधः ...शत्रोर्जनाधिपः ||'. He consoles *Duryodhana* saying that death is better than defeat and surrender and *Pandavas* ...aving laid down their weapons have as good as surrendered. *Krishna* on the other hand advises ...*andavas* if the weapon was not contained, its force would not left any one alive - 'एष चास्त्रप्रतिघनं वासुदेवः ...युक्तवान्। अन्यथा विहितः संखये वधः शत्रोर्जनाधिपः ||'.

Ashvatthama continues challenging *Drishtadhyumna* and hurting him with powerful arrows ...द्रौणिः समरे क्रुद्धं छादयामास पत्रिभिः | विव्याध चैनं दशभिः पितुर्वधमनुस्मरन्।|' seeing which *Satyaki* intervenes to deflect his ...ttack on him. When *Arjuna* and *Bhima* too enter the fray, *Ashvatthama* becomes furious with *Arjuna* ...nd especially with *Krishna* becoming obliged to use *Agneyastra* , 'द्रौणिश्चुकोप पार्थाय कृष्णाय च विशेषतः | स तु यत्तो रथे ...स्थित्वा वार्युपस्पृश्य वीर्यवान्।। देवैरपि सुदुर्धर्षमस्त्रमाग्नेयमाददे | दृश्यादृश्यानरिगणानुद्दिश्याचार्यनन्दनः || सोऽभिमन्त्र्य शरं दीप्तं विधूममिव पावकम्। सर्वतः ...क्रोधमाविश्य चिक्षेप परवीरहा ||'. When *Arjuna* nullifies the effect of *Agneyastra, Ashvatthama* becomes unhappy ...wondering what could have gone wrong 'ततो वीरौ महेष्वासौ विमुक्तौ केशवार्जुनौ || सहितौ प्रत्यदृश्येतां नभसीव तमोनुदौ |..हतावितिे ...योगसीनसेनयोरुभयोर्मतिः | तस्माभ्यागतौ दृष्ट्वा सहितौ केशवार्जुनौ ||..दृष्ट्वा पर्युदितान्पार्थान्स्वदीया व्यथिता भृशम्।| विमुक्तौ च महात्मानौ दृष्ट्वा द्रौणिः ...दुःखितः | मुहूर्तं चिन्तयामास किं त्वेतदिति मारिष ||'. Becoming completely dispirited, shocked and despaired, he breathes ...heavy. Abandoning his bow, he jumps down from the chariot crying out *fie, fie every thing is just an* ...*llusion* and starts to leave from the battle field hastily 'चिन्तयित्वा तु राजेन्द्र ध्यानशोकपरायणः | निःश्वसन्दीर्घमुष्णं च ...विमनाश्चाभवत्ततः || ततोद्रौणिर्धनुरुत्सृज्य रथात्प्रस्कन्द्य वेगितः | धिग्धिक्सर्वमिदं मिथ्येत्युक्त्वा सम्प्राद्रवद्रणात्।| '.

Seeing the proud *Ashvatthama* loose his heart, *Vyasa* arrives to console him, seeing whom *Ashvatthama* becomes emotional and asks him whether *samsara* is but an illusion or a *divine play*, seeing that even the divine weapon do not fulfill their purpose! Was there any error on his part in using the weapon, seeing that both *Krishnas* were saved from being destroyed. Neither gods nor *asuras, neither rakshasas nor gandharvas* can make the weapon worthless, how then did it fail after destroying only one battalion? 'भो भो माया यदृच्छा वा न विद्मः किमिदं भवेत्। अस्त्रं त्विदं कथं मिथ्या मम कश्च व्यतिक्रमः || अधरोत्तरमेतद्वा लोकानां वा पराभवः | यदिमौ जीवतः कृष्णौ कालो हि दुरतिक्रमः ||..सर्वघाति मया मुक्तमस्त्रं परमदारुणम्। केनेमौ मर्त्यधर्माणौ नावधीत्केशवार्जुनौ ||'. Does this mean that *Ashvatthama* who till that moment had accepted *Krishna* as *divine essence* should now doubt that he could be killed by a mere human being!

Vyasa reveals to him that *Krishna* is none other than *Narayana*, the immutable being, having neither beginning nor any end. He was the seer who performed penance on *Himalayas*, with upraised arms and intense dedication establishing himself in *Brahman* - 'योऽसौ नारायणो नाम पूर्वेषामपि पूर्वजः | आदिदेवो जगन्नाथो लोककर्ता स्वयं प्रभुः | आद्यः सर्वस्य लोकस्य अनादिनिधनोऽच्युतः ||..स तपस्तीव्रतमानस्ते शिशिरं गिरिमास्थितः | ऊर्ध्वबाहुर्महातेजा ज्वलनादित्यसंनिभः ||..स तेन तपसा तात ब्रह्मभूतो यदाभवत्|'. He had invoked *Rudra* endowed with *Rudraksha* beads and supremely luminous in origin, who had blessed him with many gifts, becoming powerful among all human beings, gods, *and gandharvas*. Since then he has been wandering in the worlds deluding the worlds in diverse manner 'अक्षमलापरिक्षिप्तं ज्योतिषां परमं निधिम्| ततो नारायणो विश्वसम्भवम्||..मत्प्रसादान्मनुष्येषु देवगान्धर्वयोनिषु | अप्रमेयबलात्मा त्वं नारायण भविष्यसि ||..एवमेत वरालब्धाः पुरस्तादविद्धि शौरिणा | स एष देवश्चरति मायया मोहयज्जगत्||'.

Then *Vyasa* reveals that *Ashvatthama* himself was also a great sage, who like *Narayana* had performed austere penance as a great devotee of *Rudra* and had gained many divine weapons. His birth and penance were similar to those of *Narayana*, except for the form in which both had worshipped *Brahman*. While *Ashvatthama* worshipped *Rudra* as a *form*, *Narayana* worshipped him as the *essence*, लिङ्ग being the eternal symbol of origin of creation. Only the one who worships *Rudra* as *essence*, is enlightened to the wisdom of the *Self*. *Krishna* is a great devotee of *Rudra* having known him as the origin, therefore through sacrificial performances *Krishna* should also be worshipped. - 'तथैव कर्मणा कृत्स्न महतस्तपसोऽपि च | तेजो मन्युं च विभ्रत्त्वं जातो रौद्रो महामते || स भवान्देववत्प्राज्ञो ज्ञात्वा भवमयं जगत्| अवाकर्षस्त्वमात्मानं नियमैस्तत्प्रियेप्सया || शुभमत्र भवान् कृत्वा महापुरुषविग्रहम्| ईजिवांस्त्वं जपैर्होमैरुपहारैश्च मानद ||..जन्मकर्मतपोयोगास्तयोस्तव च पुष्कलाः | ताभ्यां लिङ्गेऽर्चितो देवस्त्वयार्चायां युगे युगे || सर्वरूप भव ज्ञात्वा लिङ्गे योऽर्चयति प्रभुम्| आत्मयोगाश्च तस्मिन्वै शास्त्रयोगाश्च शाश्वताः ||'. Listening to this wonderful narration and offering mental obeisance to *Rudra*, *Ashvatthama* accept *Krishna's* supremacy 'स एष रुद्रभक्तश्च केशवो रुद्रसंभवः | कृष्ण एव हि यष्टव्यो यज्ञैश्चैव सनातनः || सर्वभूतभवं ज्ञात्वा लिङ्गमर्चति यः प्रभोः | तस्मिन्नभ्यधिकां प्रीतिं करोति वृषभध्वजः || तस्य तद्वचनं श्रुत्वा द्रोणपुत्रो महारथः | नमश्चकार रुद्राय बहु मेने च केशवम्||'.

When *Arjuna* meets *Vyasa* thereafter, he asks him about a strange person, resplendent like अग्नि always walking in front of him with trident in his hand, gliding all the way not even touching the ground even as innumerable tridents rise from him and destroying the enemies, though people assume that they themselves are killing them, - 'संग्रामे न्यहनं शत्रूञ्शरौघैर्विमलैरहम्| अग्रतो लक्षये यान्तं पुरुष पावकप्रभम्|| ज्वलन्त शूलमुद्यम्य यां दिशं प्रतिपद्यते | तस्यां दिशि विदीर्यन्ते शत्रवो मे महामुने || तेन भग्नानरीन्सर्वान्मद्भग्नान्मन्यते जनः | तेन भग्नानि सैन्यानि पृष्ठतोऽनुव्रजाम्यहम्|| भगवंस्तन्ममाचक्ष्व को वै स पुरुषोत्तमः | शूलपाणिर्मया दृष्टस्तेजसा सूर्यसंनिभः || न पद्भ्यां स्पृशते भूमिं न च शूलं विमुञ्चति | शूलाच्छूलसहस्राणि निष्पेतुस्तस्य तेजसा ||'. *Vyasa* assures that he is no one other than the foremost of the *Prajapatis*, well established as resplendent indweller, whose form is earth, space and the heaven, lord of the worlds, bestower of grace, *Shankara*. Therefore, *Arjuna* should go and surrender to him, since who else than he could have defeated *Ashvatthama*, *Karna*, *Kripa* and others. Offer obeisance to him and pacify him. He is *Mahadeva*, who was appearing as your vanguard and destroying your enemies. When *Arjuna* had taken a vow to kill *Jayadratha*, he was the one whom *Krishna* had pointed in his dream and who gave you the divine weapon. Go *Arjuna* and fight your battle; for one whose advisor, and saviour is *Krishna*, for such one there is no failure 'प्रजापतीनां प्रथमं तैजसं पुरुषं प्रभुम्| भुवनं भूर्भुवं देवं सर्वलोकेश्वरं प्रभुम्|| ईशानं वरदं पार्थ दृष्टवानसि शंकरम्| तं गच्छ शरणं देवं वरदं भुवनेश्वरम्||..तस्मिन्घोरे सदा पार्थ संग्रामे रोमहर्षणे | द्रौणिकर्णकृपैर्गुप्तां महेष्वासैः प्रहारिभिः || कस्तां सेनां तदा पार्थ मनसापि प्रधर्षयेत्| ऋते देवान्महेष्वासाद्बहुरूपान्महेश्वरात्|| नमस्कुरुष्व कौन्तेय तस्मै शान्ताय वै सदा ||..एष देवो महादेवो योऽसौ पार्थ तवाग्रतः | संग्रामे शत्रुवान् निघ्नंस्त्वया दृष्टः पिनाकधृक्|| सिन्धुराजवधार्थाय प्रतिज्ञाते त्वयानघ | कृष्णेन दर्शितः स्वप्ने यस्तु शैलेन्द्रमूर्धनि || एष वै भगवान्देवः संग्रामे याति तेऽग्रतः | येन दत्तानि तेऽस्त्राणि यैस्त्वया दानवा हताः ||..गच्छ युद्ध्यस्व कौन्तेय न तवास्ति पराजयः | यस्य मन्त्री च गोप्ता च पार्श्वस्थो हि जनार्दनः ||'. Speaking thus to *Arjuna*, *Vyasa* departed even as he had arrived.

With *Bhishma* lying on the bed of arrows waiting for his death to come and *Drona's* death, the question arises for the next one to lead the *Kaurava* soldiers. *Ashvatthama* advises them that for fulfilling one's objective one has to consider four objectives devotion, enterprise, vigilance and discipline, all being subject finally to the *Will of the Divine*. Even the brave warriors who are devoted, enterprising, vigilant and disciplined may loose their courage, if they do not attune themselves to *divine will* favours him 'रागो योगस्तथा दाक्ष्यं नयश्चेत्यर्थसाधकाः | उपायाः पण्डितैः प्रोक्तास्ते तु दैवमुपाश्रिताः ||..न त्विह कार्ये नैराश्यमस्माभिर्विजयं प्रति ||

ीतेगिह सर्वार्थैर्देवमप्यनुलोम्यते |..ते वयं पवरं नृणां सर्वैर्गुणगणैर्युतम्|| कर्णमेवाभिषेक्ष्यामः सैनापत्येन भारत | कर्णं सेनापतिं कृत्वा प्रमथिष्यामहे रिपून्||'. He ıggests *Karna's* appointment as the obvious and natural contender to challenge *Arjuna* alone being apable of bringing victory to *Kauravas*.

Duryodhana is pleased with this recommendation and accordingly appoints him, eulogizing 'im for his bravery and devotion and saying that while earlier ones appointed to lead his army were fond f *Arjuna* and his brothers, protecting them during their time, *Karna* is sure to bring success to *Kauravas*, since earlier *Bhihma* and *Drona* were soft with *Pandavas* because of his affection for them र्ण जानामि ते वीर्यं सौहृदं परमं मयि | तथापि त्वम्प महाबाहो पवक्ष्यामि हितं वच ||..वृद्धौ च तौ महेष्वासौ सापेक्षौ च धनंजये | मानितौ च मया वीरौ राधेय चनान्तव || पितामहत्वं सम्पेक्ष्य पाण्डुपुत्रा महारणे | रक्षितास्तान भीष्मेण दिवसानि दशैव तु || हते तस्मिन्महेष्वासे शरतल्पगते तथा | त्वयोक्ते पुरुषव्याघ्र द्रोणा ग्रासीत्पुरासरः || तेनापि रक्षिताः पार्थाः शिष्यत्वादिति मे मतिः | स चापि निहतो वृद्धो धृष्टद्युम्नेन सत्वरम्||..भवानेव तु नः शक्तो विजयाय न संशयः | पुर्वं मध्ये च श्चाच्च तथैव विहितं हितम्|| स भवान्धुर्यवत्संख्ये धुरमुद्रोढुमर्हति | अभिषेचय सैनान्ये स्वयमात्मनमात्मना ||'. *Karna* with intent to bolster *Duryodhana's* courage proudly assures him of his prowess and success, declaring that the war is as good is won even claiming unlike others that he will win even *Krishna*. 'उक्तमेतन्मया पूर्वं गान्धारे तव सन्निधौ | जेष्यामि पाण्डवान्सर्वान्सपुत्रान् सजनार्दनान्|| सेनपतिर्भविष्यामि तवाहं नात्र संशायः | स्थिरो भव महाराज जितान्विद्धि च पान्डवान्||. It is surprising to see that even the *Brahmins* who blessed *Karna* on being crowned bless him with success over *Arjuna* and *Krishna* both being killed in the process along with other *Pandavas* and *Panchalas* 'जय पार्थान्सगोविन्दान्सानुगांस्तान्महास्मृधे |..जहि पार्थान्सपाञ्चालान्राधेय विजयाय नः | उद्येन्नव सदा भानुस्तमांस्युग्रैर्गभस्तिभिः ||'. Once *Karna* was thus appointed, *Duryodhana* looked around proudly even as *Indra* did among the gods, 'एवमुक्तो महाराज ततो दुयोधनो नृपः | उत्तस्थौ राजाभिः सार्धं देवैरपि शक्यतुः ||' with *Karna* by his side shining in splendour as though another Sun has arisen in the sky 'अभिषिक्तस्तु राधेयः प्रभया सोऽमितप्रभः | अत्यरिच्यत रूपेण दिवाकर इवापरः ||'.

When the battle commences, *Karna* proceeds to arrange what was known as the crocodile formation 'व्यूहं व्यूह्य महेष्वासो मकरं शत्रुतापनः | प्रत्युद्ययौ तथा कर्णः पाण्डवान्विजिगीषया ||', seeing which *Yudhishthira* asks *Arjuna* to arrange equally strong half-moon battle-formation to counter his move, 'अर्धचन्द्रेण व्यूहेन प्रत्यव्यूहत तां चमूम्||'. In the battle that follows, great many warriors meet their death, even *Bhima* and *Ashvatthama* falling without consciousness. Later coming to senses, *Ashvatthama* again showers arrows on *Arjuna* and *Krishna* making them stunned, which creates great commotion all around, even *Sanjaya* declaring the battle was unlike what he had seen any time earlier 'नैः पतद्भिर्महाराज द्रौणिमुक्तैः समन्ततः | संछादितौ रथस्थौ तावुभौ कृष्णधनंजयौ || ततः शरशतैस्तीक्ष्णैर्भारद्वाजः प्रतापवान्| निश्चेष्टौ तावुभौ चक्रे रणे माधावपाण्डवौ || हाहाकृतमभूत्सर्वं स्थावरं जङ्गम्म तथा | चराचरस्य गोप्तारौ दृष्ट्वा संछादितौ शरैः ||..न मया तदृशो राजन्दृष्टपूर्वः पराकमः | संजज्ञे यादृशो दोणैः कृष्णौ छादयतो रणे ||'.

Seeing the uncontrollable onslaught, *Krishna* becomes uneasy looking at *Arjuna* with anger and disapproval, as if that would scorch him. He berates him for his strange attitude towards *Ashvatthama*, asking him mockingly whether he has *Gandeev* bow still in his hand or has his intelligence become irresolute and shoulders lost courage and strength, considering him as his teacher's son while he himself is surpassing in strength and chivalry. He warns him that this is not the time to become soft, neglecting the purpose for which he has descended on the battle-field 'वर्धमाने ततस्तत्र द्रोणपुत्रे विशाम्पते || हीयमाने च कौन्तेये कृष्णं रोषः समाविशत्|..ततः कुद्धोऽब्रवीत्कृष्णः पार्थं सप्रणयं वचः || अत्यद्भुतमहं पार्थ त्वयि पश्यामि संयुगे | यत्त्वां विशेषयत्याजौ द्रोणपुत्रोऽद्य भारत || कच्चित्ते गाण्डीवं हस्ते मुष्टिर्वा न व्यशीर्यत | कच्चिद् वीर्यं यथापूर्वं भुजयोर्वा बलं तव || उदीर्यमाणं हि रणे पश्यामि द्रौणिमाहवे | गुरुपुत्र इति ह्येनं मानयन्भरतर्षभ || उपेक्षां मा कृथाः पार्थ नायं कालो ह्युपेक्षितुम्||'.

Thus rebuffed, *Arjuna* assures that he will now allow *Ashvatthama* to succeed in his purpose 'एषोऽस्मि हन्मि संकल्पं शिक्षया च बलेन च |' and destroys *Ashvatthama's* weapon and chariot even as *Ashvatthama* returns that attack causing damage to *Arjuna* and *Krishna* and blood to flow from their bodies, making people imagine that they are dead - 'ततोऽविध्यद्भुवोर्मध्यं नाराचेनार्जुनो भृशम्| स तेन विबभौ द्रौणिरूर्ध्वरश्मिर्यथा रविः || अथ कृष्णौ शरशतैरश्वत्थाम्नार्दितौ भृशम्| स्वरश्मिजालविकचौ युगन्तार्काविवासतुः ||'. The battle between the two becomes furious and ferocious; both hurt in the battle, till *Krishna* declares to *Arjuna*, that he should no more weaken his resolve but kill him. *Arjuna* increases his assault destroying *Ashavatthama's* weapons and making him withdraw 'अथार्जुनं प्राह दशार्हनाथः प्रमाद्यसे किं जहि योधमेतम्| कुर्याद्धि दोषं समुपेक्षितोऽयं कष्टो भवेद्व्याधिरिवाक्रियावान्||'

Then in order to punish *Samshaptakas*, who were troubling his associates, *Arjuna* shifts his attention to them seeing which *Krishna* smilingly rebukes him saying why he is wasting time on weak opponents when *Karna* is there still to be defeated.- 'अथाब्रवीत्वासुदेवः पार्थं किं क्रीडसेऽनघ | संशप्तकान्प्रमथ्यैनान्स्ततः कर्णवधं त्वर ||'. *Arjuna* agrees and directs his attention to *Karna*. In between *Kripa* gives a stiff fight to *Drishtadhyumna* while *Kritavarma* defeats *Shikhandi*. *Dhritarashtra* to whom *Sanjaya* reported these developments feels sad tormented by his conscience lamenting that all these troubles have one common cause and that is the game of dice which *Kauravas* played, taking *Shakuni's* advice. Now seeing his sons being killed in the battle, he is of the firm belief that *divine will* alone is supreme - 'अहो द्यूतस्य निष्ठेयं घोरा सम्प्रति वर्तते | अहो तीव्राणि दुःखानि दुर्योधनकृतान्यहम्|| सोढा घोराणि बहुशः शल्यभूतानि संजय | सौबलं च तदा तात नीतिमानिति मन्यते || कर्णश्च रभसो नित्यं राजा न चाप्यनुव्रतः | यदेवं वर्तमानेषु महायुद्धेषु संजय || अश्रौषं निहतान्पुत्रान्नित्यमेव विनिर्जितान्| न पाण्डवाना समरे कश्चिदस्ति निवारकः || स्त्रीमध्यमिव गाहन्ते दैवं तु बलवत्तरम्||'. But *Sanjaya* holds *Dhritarashtra's* parental attachment to his sons to be responsible for the events, counseling him not to rue over things on which he does not have control.

With *Bhishma* and *Drona* absent, *Karna* had no one to restrain from his audacious self-adulation. He assures *Duryodhana* that he will not return from the battle field either defeating *Arjuna* or being defeated by him 'अद्य राजन्समेष्यामि पाण्डवेन यशस्विना | निहनिष्यामि तं वीरं स वा मां निहनिष्यति || इदं तु मे यथाप्राज्ञं शृणु वाक्यं विशाम्पते | आनिहत्य रणे पार्थं नाहमेष्यामि भारत ||'. Seeing *Duryodhana's* confidence bolstered, *Karna* finds that he too needs to be assured of his own capability and in a remarkable self-analysis and appraisal he takes stock of the strength and weakness of both sides, concluding that he is far superior warrior among the two. He declares that he has divine weapons even as *Arjuna* has them, but *Arjuna* is not equal to him in physical strength, valor, knowledge of weapons, bravery and therefore is sure to be defeated. He possesses *Vijaya* bow which was fashioned by *Vishvakarma* for *Indra* and given by him to *Parashurama* with which he had defeated *Kshatriyas*. Therefore, he is stronger than *Arjuna* even with his *Gandeeva*. Therefore, he is sure to defeat *Arjuna* giving the whole world to *Duryodhana* and his descendents - 'आयुधाना च मे वीर्यं दिव्यानामर्जुनस्य च || कायस्य महतो भेदे लाघवे दूरपातने | सौष्ठवे चास्त्रपाते च सव्यसाची न मत्समः || प्राणे शौर्येऽथ विज्ञाने विक्रमे चापि भारत | निमित्तज्ञानयोगे च सव्यसाची न मत्समः || सर्वायुधमहामात्रं विजयं नाम तद्धनुः | इन्द्रार्थं प्रियकामेन निर्मितं विश्वकर्मणा || तद्भार्गवाय प्रायच्छच्छक्रः परमसम्मतम्| तद्दिव्यं भार्गवो मह्यमददाद्धनुरुत्तमम् || धनुर्घोरं रामदत्तं गाण्डीवात्तद्विशिष्यते | त्रिस्सप्तकृत्वः पृथिवी धनुषा येन निर्जिता || धनुषो ह्यस्य कर्माणि दिव्यानि प्राह भार्गवः | तद्रामो ह्यददान्मह्यं तेन योत्स्यामि पाण्डवम्|| अद्य दुर्योधनाहं त्वां नन्दयिष्ये सबान्धवम्| निहत्य समरे वीरमर्जुनं जयतां वरम्|| सपर्वतवनद्वीपा हतद्विड्गा ससागरा | पुत्रपौत्रप्रतिष्ठा ते भविष्यात्यद्य पार्थिव ||'.

Karna is undoubtedly a proud warrior but often his arrogance overtakes his pride of being. He finds nothing impossible for defeating *Arjuna* and if there is anything, then he audaciously demands to be brought to his attention, declaring that even as wood cannot stop being burnt by fire, *Arjuna* cannot stop being scorched by his onslaught. Even though he is aware that he does not possess *the divine bow* like his, inexhaustible source of arrows or a charioteer like *Krishna*. But he himself has bow known as *Vijaya*, equal in capability as *Arjuna's* bow. If even after this people think that *Arjuna* is stronger, that is because *Krishna* well respected in the three worlds. is his charioteer, he has the chariot given by *Agni*, His horses area swift and his banner adorns *Hanuman*. *Krishna*, who is said to be the creator of the worlds is said to be his protector 'ज्या तस्य धनुषो दिव्या तथाक्षय्यौ महेषुधी | सारथीस्तस्य गोविन्दो मम तादृङ्न विद्यते || तस्य दिव्यं धनुः श्रेष्ठं गाण्डीवामजितं युधि | विजयं च महादिव्यं ममापि धनुरुत्तमम्|| तत्राहमधिकः पार्थाद्धनुषा तेन पार्थिव | यनि चाप्याधिको वीरः पाण्डवस्तन्निबोध मे || रश्मिग्राहश्च दाशार्हः सर्वलोकनमस्कृतः | अग्निदत्तश्च वै दिव्यो रथः काञ्चनभूषणः || अच्छेद्यः सर्वतो वीर वाजिनश्च मनोजवाः | ध्वजश्च दिव्यो द्युतिमान्वानरो विस्मयंकरः || कृष्णश्च स्रष्टा जगतो रथं तमभिरक्षति |'. If in spite of all these advanatages he desires to fight *Arjuna*, it is because in attributes and ability he is far superior to *Arjuna*, even as *Shalya* is superior to *Krishna*. No one not even god can defeat him, and *Pandavas* are after all born in human wombs - 'एतद्द्रव्यंरह हीनो योद्धुमिच्छामि पाण्डवम्|| अयं तु सदृशः शौरेः शल्यः समितिशोभनः | सारथ्यं यदि मे कुर्याद्ध्रुवस्ते विजयो भवेत्||.. एवमभ्यधिकः पार्थाद्भविष्यामि गुणैरहम्| शल्योऽप्यधिकः कृष्णादर्जुनादपि चाप्यहम्||.. तथा शाल्यसमो नास्ति हयज्ञाने हि कश्चन | सोऽयमभ्यधिकः कृष्णाद्भविष्यति रथो मम ||..न हि मे समरे शक्ताः समुद्यातु सुरासुराः | किमु पाण्डुसुता राजन्रणे मानुषयोनयः ||'.

Once *Karna* is appointed to lead the army, *Duryodhana* approaches *Shalya* and tells him that

hishma and *Drona* who were earlier leading his armies were old and were defeated by *Pandavas* rough trickery, though they performed brave deeds, leaving *Karna* alone to fulfill his desire 'वृद्धौ हि तौ शष्यासौ छलेन निहतौ युधि || कृत्वा नसुकरं कर्म गतौ स्वर्गमितोऽनघ |...कर्णो ह्येको महाबाहुरस्मत्प्रियहिते रतः ||'. Then knowing *Shalya's* islike for him, *Karna* uses mild flattery saying that h should help him in this task as renowned harioteer, even as *Krishna* is helping *Arjuna* 'त्वयी यन्तरि गधेयो विद्विषो मे विजेष्यसे | अभिपृणां हि कर्णस्य ग्रहीतान्यो न विद्यते || ऋते त्वा महाभाग वासुदेवसमं युधि | स पाहि सर्वथा कर्णं तथा वस्मा महेश्वरम्|| यथा च सर्वथाऽऽपत्सु वार्ष्णेयः पाति पाण्डवम्| तथा मद्रेश्वरद्य त्वं गधेयं तिपालय | . .भवांश्च पुरुषव्याघ्र सर्वलोकमहारथाः | शल्य कर्णोऽर्जुननाद्य येदुर्मिच्छति संयुगे || ...पार्थस्य समरे कृष्णो यथाभीपुग्रहो वरः | तथात्वामपि कर्णस्या शऽभीपुग्राहो भव ||'. Seeing them together *Pandava's* army will be dispersed even as night is dispersed with un rising in the east 'सूर्यावरुणो यथा दृष्ट्वा तमो नश्यति मारिष | तथा नश्यन्तु कौन्तेयाः सपञ्चालाः ससृञ्जयाः ||'.

Shalya is surprised and shocked by this request and replies to *Duryodhana* curtly that it is an nsult being asked to become a charioteer and praising *Karna* to be greater warrior than him, besides eing a *Shudra* obliged to serve *Brahmins.* On the contrary he is a *Kshatriyas,* born and duly consecrated rince 'अवमान्यसि गान्धारे ध्रुवं च परिशङ्कसे | यन्मां ब्रवीषि विश्रब्धं सारथ्यं क्रियतामिति || अस्मत्तोऽभ्यधिकं कर्णं मन्यमानः प्रशंससि | न चाहं युधि राधेयं णये तुल्यमात्मनः ||'. Therefore, he would rather return to his Kingdom than be *Karna's* charioteer - 'ब्रह्मक्षत्रस्य विहिताः सूता वै परिचारकाः | न क्षत्रियो वै सूतानां श्रुणुयाच्च कथञ्चन || अहं मूर्धाभिषिक्तो हि राजर्षिकुलजो नृपः | महारथः समाख्यातः सेव्यः स्तुत्यश्च वन्दिनाम्|| सोऽहमेतादृशो भूत्वानेहारिबलसूदनः | सूतपुत्रस्य संग्रामे सारथ्यं कर्तुमुत्सहे || अवमानमहं प्राप्य न योत्स्यामि कथञ्चन | आपृच्छे त्वाद्य गान्धारे गमिष्यामि गृहाय वै ||.

Snubbed in this manner, *Duryodhana* pleads with him that his intention was not to praise *Karna* as superior to him, which he will never do. Neither *Karna* nor he himself is in slightest measure superior to him. *Karna* is superior to *Arjuna* only in weapons but *Shalya* is superior to *Krishna* in skill and controlling horses 'न कर्णोऽभ्यधिकस्त्वत्तो न शङ्के त्वां च पार्थिव | न हि मद्रेश्वरो राजा कुर्यादयदनृतं भवेत्|| . . न च त्वत्तो हि राधेयो न चाहमपि वीर्यवान्| वृणेऽहं त्वां हयाग्राणां यन्तारमिह संयुगे || मन्ये चाभ्याधिकं शल्य गुणैः कर्णं धनंजयात्| भवन्तं वासुदेवाच्च लोकोऽयमिति मन्यते || कर्णो ह्यभ्यधिकः पार्था दस्त्रैरेव नरषर्भ | भवानप्यभ्यधिकः कृष्णादश्वज्ञाने बले यथा || यथाश्वहृदयं वेद वासुदेवो महात्मनाः | द्विगुणं त्वं तथा वेत्सि मद्रराजेश्वरात्मजः ||'. Thus complimented exceedingly pleased *Shalya* accepts the proposal with one condition that he would be free to speak to *Karna* in any manner he chooses 'यन्मां ब्रवीषि गान्धारे मध्ये सैनस्य कौरव | विशिष्टं देवकीपुत्रात्प्रीतिमानस्म्यहं त्वयी || एष सारथ्यमातिष्ठे राधेयस्य यशस्विनः | युध्यतः पाण्डवाग्र्येण यथा त्वं वीर मन्यसे || समयश्च हि मे वीर कश्चिद्वैकर्तनं प्रति | उत्सृजेयं यथाश्रद्धमहं वाचोऽस्य संनिधौ ||'.

Seeing his plans going astray, *Duryodhana* decides to praise *Shalya's* own vaour and courage saying that it is always desirable that the charioteer should be superior to the one who rides in the chariot. Even gods had chosen *Brahma* to be the chariot and even so he should be *Karna's* charioteer being superior to *Karna* 'रथिनोऽभ्यधिको वीर कर्तव्यो रथसारथिः | तस्मत्त्वं पुरुषव्याघ्र नियच्छ तुरगान्युधि || यथा देवगणैस्तत्र वृतो यन्तात्पितामहः | तथास्माभिर्भवान्यतनात्कर्णादभ्यधिको वृतः ||'. Thus being praised, *Shalya* softens his attitude replying that *Krishna* must have been aware of this since he, who knows past, present and future, has agreed to be *Arjuna's* charioteer. If *Karna* kills *Arjuna*, then *Krishna* is sure to fight instead with all his weapons and exterminating *Kauaravas* to death and none of them will be able to oppose him 'कृष्णस्य चापि विदितं सर्वमतत्पुरा ह्यभूत्|| यथा पितामहो जज्ञे भगवान्सारथिस्तदा | अनागतमतिकान्तं वेद कृष्णोऽपि तत्त्वतः || एतदर्थं विदित्वापि सारथ्यमुपजग्मिवान् | स्वयंभूर्त्तरिव रुद्रस्य कृष्णः पार्थस्य भारत || यदि हन्याच्च कौन्तेयं सूतपुत्रः कथंचन | दृष्ट्वा पार्थं हि निहतं स्वयं यास्यिति केशवः | शङ्खचक्रगदापाणिर्धक्ष्यते नव वाहिनीम्| न चापि तस्य क्रुद्धस्य वार्ष्णेयस्य महात्मनः || स्थास्यते प्रत्यनीकेषु कश्चिदत्र नृपस्तव |'.

Even after hearing these words spoken by *Shalya*, *Duryodhana* did not stop convincing him. He reminds him that it is not proper that he should treat *Karna* with insults since he too is a great warrior. When he has the power to destroy *Pandavas* on the battle field, how can *Pandavas* defeat him. Besides *Shalya* himself is a brave warrior skilled in many weapons and arts, like whom there no one else in the world. Because you are thorn in the enemy's heart, you are referred as *Shalya*, Have you nay doubts whether *Krishna's* strength is superior to yours. Even as after *Arjuna's* death *Krishna* will have to look after the *Pandava's* armies you too will have to look after *Kaurava's* army should *Karna* be killed instead. Why should *Krishna* alone destroy *Kauravas* and not likewise you destroy *Panadava's* armies. Therefore, he fully depend on him to lead on the path which his brothers have traversed 'नं कथं पाण्डवा युद्धे

विजेष्यन्ति महारथम्|| यो हन्यात्समरे कुद्धो वजहस्तं पुरंदरम्| त्वं च सवास्त्रविद्वीरः सर्वविद्यास्त्रपरगः || बाहुवीर्यण ते तुल्यः पृथिव्यां नास्ति कश्चन | त्व शल्यभूतः शत्रुणामविषह्यः परकमे || ततस्त्वमुच्यसे राजञ्शल्य इत्यरिसूदन | तव बाहुबलं प्राप्य न शेकुः सर्वसात्वताः || तव बाहुबलादराजन्किं नु कृष्णो बलाधिकः यथा हि कृष्णेन बलं धार्यं वै फाल्गुन हते | तथा कर्णात्ययीभावे त्वया धार्यं महद्बलम्| किमर्थं समरे सैन्यं वासुदेवो न्यवारयत् || किमर्थं च भवान्सैन्यं न हनिष्यति मारिष | त्वत्कृते पदवीं गन्तुमिच्छेयं युधि मारिष | सोदरणां च वीरणां सर्वेषां च महीक्षिताम्||'.

Shalya was unhappy for having been tricked by *Duryodhana* in joining him and not *Pandavas*, who were closer to him being the uncle of *Nakula* and *Sahadeva*. But when *Shalya* finds himself being compared with *Krishna* he becomes overwhelmed and assures *Duryodhana* that he will be *Karna's* charioteer but he will be free to speak his mind when performing his tasks. However, recalling his assurance given to *Yudhishthira* that he would do every thing to dampen *Karna's* enthusiasm to fight the battle, he tells *Duryodhana* that he will not spare expressing his advise to *Karna* even if it does not please him, being well-known for his sharp tongue as well as his sharp arrows tongue - 'यन्मां ब्रवीषि गान्धारे अग्रे सैन्यस्य मानद | विशिष्टं देवकीपुत्रात्प्रीतिमानस्म्यहं त्वयि || एष सारथ्यमातिष्ठे राधेयस्य यशस्विनः | युध्यतः पाण्डवाग्र्येण यथा त्वं वीर मन्यसे ||..नातिहृष्टमना शेष मद्रराजोऽभिभाषते | राजन्मधुरया वाचा पुनरेनं ब्रवीहि वै ||... यत्रास्मि भरतश्रेष्ठ योग्यः कर्मणि कर्हिचित्| तत्र सर्वात्मना युक्तो वक्ष्ये कार्यधुरं तव || यत्तु कर्णमहं ब्रूयां हितकामः प्रियाप्रियं | मम तत्क्षमतां सर्वं भवान्कर्णश्च सर्वशः ||'. *Shalya* was a proud man bordering almost to arrogance and self-praise, therefore he leaves them after informing them in mock humility that he does not like praising his own valor, but speaks only to assure them confidence in his brave deeds that he is able to be *Karna's* charioteer even as *Matali* is able charioteer for *Indra*. Therefore he should remain without any worry. 'आत्मनिन्दाऽऽत्मपूजा च परनिन्दा परस्तवः | अनाचरितमार्याणां वृत्तमेतच्चतुर्विधम्|| यत्तु विद्वन्प्रवक्ष्यामि प्रत्ययार्थमहं तव | आत्मनः स्तवसंयुक्तं तन्निबोध यथातथम्|| अहं शक्रस्य सारथ्ये योग्यो मातलिवत्प्रभो | अप्रमादात्प्रयोगाच्च ज्ञानविद्याचिकित्सितः || ततः पार्थेन संग्रामे युध्यमानस्य तेऽनघ | वाहयिष्यामि तुरगान्विज्वरो भव सूतज ||'.

Duryodhana is happy for his consent and even *Karna* departing from tradition allows *Shalya* to mount the chariot first and then shining like resplendent Sun with flashes of lightening- यथाम्भोदं विद्युत्वन्तं दिवाकरः he mounts the chariot. *Duryodhana* consecrates *Karna* wishing him success in taking *Yudhishthira* prisoner or killing *Arjuna, Bhima, Nakula* and *Sahadeva* as well 'गृहाण धर्मराजं वा जहि वा त्वं धनंजयम्| भीमसेनं च राधेय माद्रीपुत्रौ यमावपि || जयश्च तेऽस्तु भद्रं ते प्रत्याहि पुरुषर्षभ || पाण्डुपुत्रस्य सैन्यानि कुरु सर्वाणि भस्मसात्|'. Assuring him success in his adventure, *Karna* tells *Shalya* to take his chariot where the *Pandavas* are, 'चोदयाश्वान्महाबाहो यावद्धन्मि धनंजयम्| भीमसेनं यमौ चोभौ राजानं च युधिष्ठिरम्||'. *Karna's* arrogant self-conceit irritates *Shalya* who chides him saying it is futile to ridicule *Pandavas* knowing that they posess divine weapons and would neither boast when he hears the tremours of the *Gandeev* bow nor when he sees *Bhima's* strength, nor meets others - 'सूतपुत्र कथं नु त्वं पाण्डवानवमन्यसे || सर्वास्त्रज्ञान्महेष्वासान्सर्वानेव महाबलान्| अनिवर्तिनो महाभागानजय्यान्सत्यविक्रमान्||..यदा श्रोष्यसि निर्घोषं विस्फूर्जितमिवाशनेः | राधेय गण्डीवस्याजौ तदा नैवं वदिष्यसि || यदा द्रक्ष्यसि संग्रामे धर्मपुत्रं यमौ तथा ||'. Having agreed earlier not to be provoked by *Shalya's* mocking words, *Karna* keeps quiet, telling him *well well*, and to *get going, get going* 'अनादृत्य तु तद् वाक्यं मद्रराजेन भाषितम्| याहीत्येवाब्रवीत्कर्णो मद्रराजं तरस्विनम्||'.

Both *Karna* and *Shalya* could not stop wrangling with each other, former repeatedly asserting his superiority and latter not loosing any opportunity to put him down. This exasperates *Karna* making his protesting why he is discouraging him when the battle is about to start, though assuring him that his words would have no effect on him. *Arjuna* would be killed before the war ends, in spite of his discouraging words. *Shalya* keeps quiet but seeing *Karna* continuing to brag reminds him no one can face *Arjuna* with *Krishna* besides them, even if all the gods come to help them snubbing him curtly: *enough, enough of this conceit*. No warrior would speak of one's own strength and valour. How can one low and haughty like him compare himself with mighty *Arjuna*. If he does not run away from the battle field again as he did earlier, then this would be another occasion for him to do or die by his hands - 'विरम विरम कर्ण कत्थनादतिरभसोऽप्यतिवाचमुक्तवान्| क्व च हि नरवरो धनंजयः क्व पुनरहो पुरुषाधमो भवान्|| इदमपरमुपस्थितं पुनस्तव निधनाय सुसम्युद्धमद्य वै | यदि न रिपुभयात्पलायसे समरगतोऽद्य हतोऽसि सूतज ||'. *Karna* bursts out in anger reproaching him that his words are certainly not commendable 'भवतु भवतु किं विकत्थसे ननु मम तस्य हि युद्धमुद्यतम्| यदि स जयति मामिहाहवे तत इदमस्तु सुकत्थितं तव ||'.

Once on the battle field, seeing *Arjuna* no where to be seen, *Karna* asks every one about his

hereabouts, offering immense wealth for those who provide information 'प्रयाणे च ततः कर्णो हर्षयन्वाहिनीं तव | क ममंग दृष्ट्वा पाण्डवान्पर्यपृच्छत || यो मामद्य महात्मानं दर्शयपच्छ्वेतवाहनम्| तस्मै दद्यामभिप्रेतं धनं यन्मनसेच्छति ||..हत्वा च सहितौ कृष्णौ तार्योर्वित्तानि शः | तस्मै ददान्यहं यो मे पत्रूयात् केशवार्जुनि ||'. *Shalya* taunts him that it is waste of his wealth because he is sure to find *juna* sooner than he expects, because no one has ever heard a vulture killing a lion. *Karna* seems to be arless like the hare which has not seen the lion. Therefore, so long as *Arjuna* does not challenge him ith his *Gandeeva* he may boast as much as he wishes 'मा सूतपुत्र दानेन सौवर्णं हस्तिषड्गवम्| पयच्छ पुरुपायाद्य द्रक्ष्यसि त्वं जयम्||..यच्च पार्थयसे हन्तुं कृष्णौ मोहादवृथैव तत्| न हि शुश्रुम सम्मर्दे कोष्ट्रा सिंहौ निपातितौ ||...श्रुगालोऽपि वने कर्ण शशैः परिवृतो वसन्| मन्यते सिंहमात्मानं वत्सिहं न पश्यति || तथा त्वमपि राधेय सिंहमात्मानमिच्छसि | अपश्यञ्शत्रुदमनं नरव्याघ्रं धनंजयम्||.

Karna is frustrated at every stage listening to *Shalya's* remarks, protesting that he is expected be friendly encouraging him to fight and not frighten or dissuade him, but seeing him act, he appears ore an enemy than a well-wisher 'स्वबाहुवीर्यमाश्रित्य प्रार्थयाम्यर्जुनं रणे | त्वं तु मित्रमुखः शत्रुर्मां भीषायितुमिच्छसि || '. Insults ying from both the sides in endless innuendoes and invectives, with *Shalya* praising *Arjuna* as more perior than him, caustically remarking that a rabbit in the company of the vulture, so long they do not e the lion nearby, think themselves to be strong like lions. In similar fashion *Karna* seems to be inking himself as brave as *Arjuna*. So long he does hear the sound of *Gandeev* bow, *Karna* can as well rag to his heart's content 'श्रृगालोऽपि वने कर्ण शशैः परिवृत्तो वसन्| मन्यते सिंहमात्मानं यावत् सिंहं न पश्यति || तथा त्वमपि गधेय हमात्मानमिच्छसि | अपश्यपञ्शत्रुदमनं नताव्याघ्रं धनंहायम्||...यावद्गांडीवघोषं त्वं न श्रुणोषि महाहवे | तावदेव त्वया कर्ण शक्यं वक्तुं यथेच्छसि ||'.

Desperate *Karna* informs *Shalya* that his intention seems to defeat his resolve to kill *Arjuna* whereas *Shalya* sniggers his self praise. Exasperated *Karna* tells *Shalya* that only he who is competent himself can judge another person's competence and since he does not know *Krishna* or *Arjuna's* strength as much as he knows himself, he is challenging them with full confidence. He is not afraid of them but eels honoured that he would be fighting with both of them - 'गुणान्गुणवतां शल्य गुणवान्वेत्ति नागुणः || त्वं तु शल्य गुणैर्हीनः किं ास्यसि गुणागुणम्|| ... तथा कृष्णस्य माहात्म्यमृषभस्य महीक्षिताम्| यथाहं शल्य जानामि न त्वं जानसि तन्तथा || एवमेवातमनो वीर्यमहं वीर्यं च पाण्डवे | नन्नेवह्वये युद्धे शालाय गण्डीवधारिणाम्||. Being his well wisher, he should not frighten him, since either he will kill hem and or be killed by them. Therefore he is determined to fight even if thousands of *Krishna* and hundreds of *Arjunas* challenge him - 'अस्ति वायमिषुः शल्य सुपुङ्खो रक्तभोजनः |.. तेनाहमिषुणा शल्य वासुदेवधनंजयौ | योत्स्ये गमसकुद्द्रस्ततकर्म सदृशं मम || सर्वेषां वृष्णिवीगणां कृष्णे लक्ष्मीः प्रतिष्ठिता | सर्वेषां पान्डुपुत्राणां जयः पार्थे प्रतिष्ठितः || उभयं तु समासाद्य को निर्वर्तितुमर्हति | ावेतौ पुरुषव्याघ्रौ समेतौ स्यान्दनं स्थितौ || मामेकमभिसंयातौ सुजातं पश्य शल्य मे |.. अर्जुने गाण्डीवं कृष्णे चकं तार्क्ष्यकपिध्वजौ || भीरूणां त्रासजननं शल्य हर्षकं मम |. . सुहृद्भूत्वा रिपुः किं मां कृष्णाभ्यां भीषयिष्यसि | तौ वा मामद्य हन्तारौ हनिष्ये वापि तावहम्|| नाहं बिभेमि कृष्णाभ्यां विजान्नात्मनो बलम्| वासुदेवसहस्रं वा फाल्गुनानां शतानि वा | अहमेको हनिष्यामि जोषमास्स कुदेशज ||'.

As one born *Kshatriya* though fate had cheated him, *Karna* tells *Shalya* that war is the righteous duty for *Kshatriya* and the one who falls on the battle field will surely become eligible for fame among the brave. *Duryodhana* is his dear friend therefore he places everything for his pleasure. But listening to *Shalya*, he gets the impressions that *Pandavas* seem to have planted him surreptuously as their spy. Therefore, he is not dissuaded by *Shalya's* intemperate words like one is not bewildered by words of an agnostic. If he does not keep his mouth shut, then he would surely kill him and feed crows his flesh. If he had not promised *Duryodhana* to bear his insular conduct, he would have been dead by this time. Therefore of he does not stop his prattle he will; kill him here itself with his mace breaking his head in hundred pieces. To day every one who has ears will hear and who has eyes will see that he has killed *Arjuna* and *Krishna* or he himself is by them 'एष मुख्यतमो धर्मः क्षत्रियस्येति नः श्रुतम्|| यदाजौ निहतः शेते सद्भिः समभिपूजितः | सोऽयं प्रियः सखा चास्मि धार्तराष्ट्रस्य धीमतः || तदर्थे हि मम प्राणा यच्च मे विद्यते वसु | व्यक्तं त्वमुप्युपहितः पाण्डवैः पापदेशज || यथा चामित्रवत्सर्वं त्वमस्मासु प्रवर्तसे | कामं न खलु शक्योऽहं त्वद्विधानां शतैरपि | संग्रामादविमुखः कर्तुं धर्मज्ञ इव नास्तिकैः | सारङ्ग इव धर्मार्तः कामं विलप शुष्य च || नाहं भीषयितुं शक्यः क्षत्रवृत्ते व्यवस्थितः |...एवं विद्वञ्जोषमास्स्व त्रासार्तकिं बहु भाष्यसे || मा त्वां हत्वा प्रदास्यामि कव्यादभ्यो मद्रकाधम ||...पुनश्चोदीदृशं वाक्यं मद्रराज यदिवक्ष्यसि || शिरस्ते पातयिष्यामि गदया वज्रकल्पया | श्रेतारस्त्विदमद्येह द्रष्टारो वा कुदेशज || कर्णं वा जघ्नतुः कृष्णौ कर्णो व निजघन तौ |'.

One thing becomes clear that *Karna* was aware that *Arjuna's* charioteer *Krishna* was no one else than the creator himself, 'कृष्णश्च स्रष्टा जगतो रथं तमभिरक्षति', though he seldom refers him as the supreme

equal to both *Krishna* and *Arjuna* - 'उवाच शल्य person, considering himself equal in strength and courage नौ चाप्यहं शस्त्रभृतां वरिष्ठौ व्यपेतभीर्योधयिष्यामि कृष्णौ |'. It विदितं ममैतदयथाविधावार्जुनवासुदेवौ || शौरे रथं वाहयतोर्जुनस्य बलं महास्त्राणि च पाण्डवस्य | may be recalled that even at the close of the conversation which *Krishna* had with *Karna*, before the battle preparations begin, though *Karna* treats *Krishna* with all the respects, he does not forget to tell him that if they both live at the end of the war, they will meet again or surely in the worlds beyond.

Before the battle between the two begins, which *Sanjaya* describes as one between gods and demons - 'चिरकालागतमिदमद्येदानीं भविष्यति | अद्य दक्ष्याम संग्रामं घोरं देवासुरोपमम्||', *Yudhishthira* assembles all his brothers and warriors to meet him in battle, while *Shalya* continues to weaken *Karna's* confidence, telling him the enemy whom he was seeking is approaching along with *Krishna* towards him, 'अयं सख्य आयातः श्वेताश्वः कृष्णसारथिः | दुर्वारः सर्वसैन्यानां विपाकः कर्मणामिव || श्रूयते तुमुलः शब्दो यथा मेघस्वनो महान्| ध्रुवमेतौ महात्मानौ वासुदेवधनंजयौ || अद्य दक्ष्यसि तं वीरं श्वेताश्वं कृष्णसारथीम्| निघ्नन्तं शास्त्रवान्संख्ये यं कर्ण परिपृच्छसि || अद्य तौ पुरुषव्याघ्रौ लोहिताक्षौ परंतपौ | वासुदेवार्जुनौ कर्ण द्रष्टास्येकरथे स्थितौ || सारथिर्यस्य वार्ष्णेयो गाण्डीवं यस्य कार्मुकम्|'. *Karna* was no mean warrior and the battle soon turns out to be ferocious, with many heroes killed on both sides. In one confrontation *Karna* hurts *Yudhishthira* badly, destroying his chariot and horses. When *Nakula* and *Sahadeva* assist *Yudhishthira* to retire to the camp he is charged again *Shalya* screaming at him not to take *Yudhishthira* a captive which bring *Kauravas* surely to be destroyed, 'मा कर्ण गृहीथाः पार्थिवोत्तमम्| गृहीतमात्रो हत्वा त्वां मा करिष्यति भस्मसात्||. *Karna* knew better and had no intention to harm him being aware of his promise to *Kunti* that he will kill no other than *Arjuna,* but looses no opportunity to mock at Yudhishthira that as *Kshatriya* he should not run away from battle afraid of life. advising him to take shelter with *Krishna* and *Arjuna* - 'अब्रवीत् प्रहसन्राजन्कुत्सयन्निव पाण्डवम्| कथं नाम कुले जातः क्षत्रधर्मे व्यवस्थितः || प्रजह्यात्समरं भीतः प्राणान्रक्षन्महाहवे | न भवान् क्षत्रधर्मेषु कुशलो हीति मे मतिः ||..स्वगृहं गच्छ कौन्तेय यत्र तौ केशवार्जुनौ | न हि त्वां समरे राजन्हन्यात्कर्णः कथंचन ||'. *Yudhishthira* embarrassed by these innuendos withdraws, *Karna* directing his attention on *Bhima* who was rushing towards him angrily 'पश्य कर्ण महाबाहुं संक्रुद्धं पान्डुनन्दनम्| दीर्घकालार्जितं क्रोधं मोक्तुकामं त्वयी ध्रुवम्|| ईदृशं नास्य रूपं मे दृष्टपूर्वं कथंचन | अभिमन्यौ हते कर्ण राक्षसे च घटोत्कचे ||'. *Shalya* remarks that *Karna* has not seen *Bhima* so angry even when *Abhimanyu* and *Ghatotkacha* were killed. *Karna* fully shares *Shalya's* assessment confiding in him that his life-long desire was only to kill *Arjuna* or be killed by him 'भीमसेनं प्रति विभो तत्सत्यं नात्र संशयः || एष शूरश्च वीरश्च क्रोधनश्च वृकोदरः | निरपेक्षः शरीरे च प्राणतश्च बलाधिकः || . .चिरकालाभिलषितो ममायं तु मनोरथः || अर्जुन समरे हन्यां मां वा हन्याद्धनंजयः |'. *Shalya* advises him to engage *Bhima* in battle to draw *Arjuna* to come and help him.

The battle between *Karna* and *Bhima* takes an unexpected turn. Hit by *Bhima's* powerful blow. *Karna* is dazed and sinks in his chariot, *Bhima* angrily desiring to sever his tongue that had spoken words of humiliation to *Draupadi,* only to be reminded by *Shalya* not to kill him, reminding him of *Arjuna's* vow to kill *Karna* 'स भीमसेनाभिहतः सूतपुत्रः कुरूद्वह | निषसादरथोपस्थे विसंज्ञः पृतनापतिः || एतस्मिन्नन्तरे दृष्ट्वा मदराजो वृकोदरम् जिव्हां छेत्तुं समायान्तं सान्त्वयन्निदमब्रवीत्|| भीमसेन महाबाहो यत्त्वा वक्ष्यामि तच्छृणु | वचनं हेतुसम्पन्न श्रुत्वा चैतत्तथा कुरु || अर्जुनेन प्रतिज्ञातो वधः कर्णस्य शुष्मिणः || तां तथा कुरु भद्रं ते प्रतिज्ञां सव्यसाचिनः ||'. Thus reminded, *Bhima* stops, telling him that he remembers the vow but unable to listen to *Karna's* insulting words for *Yudhishthira,* he had momentarily forgotten preferring to cut off at least his tongue. He agrees his words as bitter medicine. Otherwise, *Arjuna* will never want to live having no opportunity to kill *Karna* and if *Arjuna* dies all the rest of them will also die Therefore, he asks *Shalya* to take him away from his sight, to concentrated destroying *Karna's* remaining soldiers 'दृढव्रतत्वं पार्थस्य जानामि नृपसत्तम | राज्ञस्तु धर्षणं पापः कृतवान्मम सन्निधौ || ततः कोपाभिभूतेन शेषं न गणितं मया | पतिते चापि राधेये न मे मन्युः शमं गतः || राज्ञस्तु प्रियकामेन कालोऽयं परिपालितः | भवता यदुक्तोस्मि वाक्यं हेत्वर्थसंहितम्|| तद्गृहीतं महाराज कटुकस्यमिवौषधम् | हीनप्रतिज्ञो बीभत्सुर्न हि जीवेत कर्हिचित्|| अस्मिन्विनष्टे नष्टाः स्मः सर्व एव केशवाः | युधिष्ठिरस्य कोपेन पूर्वं दग्धो नृशंसकृत्|| त्वया संरक्षितस्त्वस्य मत्सामीपादुपायतः ||'.

Arjuna in the meantime kills many of the *Samshaptakas* and seeing *Karna's* flag fluttering at some distance, he tells *Krishna* to take his chariot, since he is difficult to be overpowered by others. 'न च कर्ण रणे शक्ता जेतुमन्ये महारथाः | जानिते हि भवान्कर्ण वीर्यवन्तं पराक्रमे || तत्र याहि यतः कृष्णो द्रावयत्येष नो बलम्| वर्जयित्वा रणे याहि सूतपुत्रं महारथम्|| एतन्मे रोचते कृष्ण यथा वा तव रोचते |'. A great battle ensues when *Ashvatthama,* intervenes appearing like *Yama* at the time of final destruction, showering innumerable arrows on *Arjuna* and *Krishna*, 'अन्तकाले यथा क्रुद्धो मृत्युः किङ्करदण्डभृत्||', concealing them both completely, 'तैः पतद्भिर्महाराज द्रौणिमुक्तैः समन्ततः | संछादितौ रथस्थौ तावुभौ

ऋधनंजययौ ||'. *Sanjaya* repeats wondering again that the arrows enveloped them unlike any thing seen by im earlier, 'न मया तादृशो गजनदृष्टपूर्वं पराक्रमः | संग्रामे यादृशो द्रौणेः कृष्णौ संछादयिष्यतः ||'.

Krishna is perturbed seeing *Ashvatthama* having an upper hand and speaks to *Arjuna* about his oineless response to *Ashvatthama's* bravery, asking whether he is unwell and his shoulders lost their 'rength or is his *Gandeev* bow still in his hands or is he treating him as teacher's son, reminding him that iis not the time for irresponsible attitude 'द्रौणिपाण्डवयोरेवं वर्तमाने महारणे | वर्धमाने च राजेन्द्र द्रोणपुत्रे महाबले || हीयमाने च कौन्तेये णे रोषः समाविशत्|..ततः क्रुद्धोऽब्रवीत् कृष्णः पार्थं सप्रणयं तदा ||..कच्चिद्वीर्यं यथापूर्वं भुजयोर्वा बलं तव | गाण्डीवं हस्ते रथे तिष्ठसि चार्जुन || च्चित्कुशलिनौ बाहु मुष्टिर्वा न व्यशीर्यत | उदीर्यमाणं हि रणे पश्यामि द्रौणिमाहवे || गुरुपुत्र इति ह्येनं मानयन्भरतर्षभ | उपेक्षां मा कुरु पार्थ नायं कालं उपेक्षितुम्||'. 'hus chided by *Krishna, Arjuna* decisively cuts *Ashvatthama's* bow, mace and other weapons with his pear. Hit with such strong force *Ashvatthama* is stunned, supporting himself on his flag-mast, seeing vhich his charioteer takes him to safety.

Duryodhana seeing the turn of events bolsters *Karna's* courage saying that the passage to the eavens which warriors look forward is laid down before him and the opportunity to show his valor is on and. Having killed *Pandavas* he will surely rule the lands and if defeated sure is his place in heavens - यदृच्छयैतत्सम्प्राप्तं स्वर्गद्वारमपावृतम्| सुखिनः क्षत्रियाः कर्ण लभन्ते युद्धमीदृशम् || सदृशैः क्षत्रियैः शूरैः शूराणां युध्यतां युधि | इष्टं भवति राधेय तदिदं समुपस्थितम्|| हत्वा च पाण्डवान्युद्धे स्फीतामुर्वीमवाप्स्यथ | निहता वा परैर्युद्धे वीरलोकमवाप्स्यस ||'. Hearing these spirited words, even *Ashvatthama* becomes encouraged and vows to tear down *Dhrishtadyumna's* armour and weapons, attaining the heavenly place of he fails to do so. If *Arjuna* or *Bhima* comes to protect *Dhrishtadyumna,* they too will be killed 'प्रत्यक्षं सर्वसैन्यानां भवतां चापि पश्यताम्| न्यस्तशस्त्रो मम पिताधृष्टद्युम्नेन पातितः ||..धृष्टद्युम्नमहत्वाहं न विमोक्ष्यामि दंशनम्| अनृतायां प्रतिज्ञायां नाहं स्वर्गमवाप्नुयाम्|| अर्जुनो भीमसेनश्च योधो यो रक्षिता रणे | धृष्टद्युम्नस्य तं संख्ये निहनिष्यामि सायकैः ||'.

While *Karna, Ashavatthama* thus are engaged with *Bhima, Arjuna* expresses concern not seeing *Yudhishthira* any where. To satisfy himself, he asks *Krishna* to take his chariot to *Yudhishthira* 'न च पश्यामि दाशार्ह धर्मराजं युधिष्ठिरम्| नापि केतुर्युधां श्रेष्ठ धर्मराजस्य दृश्यते ||..तस्मात्त्वं मत्प्रियं कुर्वन्याहि यत्र युधिष्ठिरः | दृष्ट्वा कुशलिनं युद्धे धर्मपुत्रं महाजुनम्|| पुनर्युद्धास्मि वार्ष्णेय शत्रुभिः सह संयुगे |', only to be advised by *Krishna* to concentrate on the battle filed where great destruction of the *Bharatas* and *Kshatriyas* is taking place due to *Duryodhana's* unwise action, 'पश्य पार्थ महारौद्रो वर्तते भरतक्षयः | पृथिव्यां क्षत्रियाणां वै दुर्योधनकृते महान्||'. *Sanjaya* holds *Dhritarashtra* responsible the great intransigence and ill-advise 'एवमेव क्षयो वृत्तः पृथिव्यांपृथिवीपते | तावकानां परेषां च राजन्दुर्मन्त्रिते तव ||'.

In the battle that fellows, *Karna* fights with extra-ordinary courage and *Ashvatthama* challenges *Drishtadhyumna* and seeing him, hits him with powerful weapons. *Arjuna* intervenes to protect him with weapons which resemble those of *Yama, Ashvatthama* becomes unconscious and is removed, even as *Karna* sees *Arjuna* whom he was looking for 'अर्जुनोऽपि महाराज द्रौणिं विव्याध पत्रिभिः | तं द्रोणपुत्रः संक्रुद्धो बाह्वोरुरसि चार्पयत्|| क्रोधितस्तु रणे पार्थो नराचं कालसम्मितम्| द्रोणपुत्राय चिक्षेप कालदण्डमिवापरम् || ब्राह्मणस्यांसदेशे स निपपात महाद्युतिः | स विह्वलो महाराज शरवेगेन संयुगे ||..ततः कर्णो महाराज व्यक्षिपद्विजयं धनुः || अर्जुनं समरे क्रुद्धः प्रेक्षमाणो मुहुर्मुहुः | द्वैरथं चापि पार्थेन कामयानो महारणे ||'. Seeing the time for the battle between *Arjuna* and *Karna* has arrived, *Krishna* encourage *Arjuna* to fight with renewed courage describing the brave deeds of his opponent and that *Duryodhana* is pursuing *Yudhishthira* either to be killed or taken captive 'एष पाण्डव ते भ्राता धार्तराष्ट्रैर्महाबलैः | जिघांसुभिर्महेष्वासैर्द्रुतं पार्थोऽनुसार्यते ||..मृत्योर्मुखगतं मन्ये कुन्तीपुत्रं युधिष्ठिरम्| हुतमग्नौ च कौन्तेयं दुर्योधनवशं गतम्||'. *Karna* casts an expansive glance on the barrel field, like a tusker which has entered the garden full of crop. *Kauravas* become overjoyed seeing *Karna's* courage and skill in showering arrows and destroying enemy soldiers like fire pursuing butterflies. Arjuna firms up his decision to kill *Karna* who is the offender towards *Yudhishthira.*

In spite of the precautions taken by *Arjuna* and *Bhima, Karma* fights with *Yudhishthira* when *Shalya,* maternal uncle of *Nakula* and *Sahdeva*, with paternal concern dissuades him saying why he is wasting time and energy when his main concern should be to concentrate on *Arjuna*. In spite of this reminder *Karma* continues to harass *Yudhishthira*, even as *Shalya* castigating him for digressing his attention from his main objective He warns him that if he kills *Yudhishthira* then *Arjuna* will surely kill *Kauravas* and *Duryodhana's* victory would then be impossible. Look at *Arjuna* who is coming here

with *Krishna. Karna* without listening to his words injures *Yudhishthira* and makes him withdraw to his camp, telling *Nakula* and *Sahadeva* to help *Bhima* who was then fighting *Duryodhana*.

Hearing that *Yudhishthira* is injured by *Karna* and has retired to his camp, *Arjuna* suggests that they should go inquiring about his health. *Bhima* does not accompany saying that if he goes that will give impression to *Kauravas* that they have deserted the battle field 'त्वमेव जानीहि महानुभाव राज्ञः प्रवृत्तिं भरतर्षभ | अहं हि यद्यर्जुन यास्यमित्रा वदन्ति मां भीतं इति प्रवीराः ||'. When *Krishna* and *Arjuna* reach the camp together, *Yudhishthira* greets them with pleasure under the impression that they have killed *Karna* recalling the humiliation suffered during the thirteen years - 'स्वागतं देवकीमातः स्वागतं ते धनंजय | प्रियं मे दर्शनं गाढं युवयोरच्युतार्जुनौ || अक्षताभ्यामरिष्टाभ्यां हतो कर्णो महारथः || ...त्रयोदशाहं वर्षाणि यस्माद्भीतो धनंजय | न स्म निद्रां लभे रात्रौ न चाहनि सुखं क्वचित्||...को नु मे जीवितेनार्थो राज्येनार्थो भवेत्पुनः | ममैव विक्षतस्याद्य कर्णेनाहवशोभिना || न प्राप्तपूर्वं यद्भीष्मात्कृपद्रोणाच्च संयुगे | तत्प्राप्तमद्य मे युद्धे सूतपुत्रान्महारथात्|| मत्वां पृच्छामि कौन्तेय यथाद्य कुशलं त्वया | तन्ममाचक्ष्व कार्त्स्न्येन यथा कर्णो हतस्त्वया ||...अमर्षजं निकृतिसमीरणेग्निं हृदि स्थितं ज्वलनमिमं सदा मम | हतो मया सोऽद्य समेत्य कर्ण इति ब्रुवन्प्रशमयसेऽद्य फाल्गुन ||'. Hearing these words, *Arjuna* tells him that he had to fight *Ashvatthama* when he intervened during their battle with *Samsapatkas*, therefore, they have come to inquire of his health.

Hearing the words that *Karna* is still alive, *Yudhishthira* bursts out in anger why has *Arjuna* come frightened leaving *Bhima* alone to fight the battle. He reminds him *Arjuna* that he had repeatedly vowed in *Dvaitavana* as well later that he will kill *Karna* with single chariot. When they were all relying on him to fulfill his vow, he come here as if making him feel as if he has entered the nether world and not heaven. If he had not promised him so then he would not have invited *Srinjaya*, *Kekayas* and others to participate in this war - 'त्यक्त्वा रणे यदपाया सः भीमं यन्नाशकः सूतपुत्रं निहन्तुम्|| यत्तद्वाक्यं द्वैतवने त्वयोक्तं कर्णं हन्तास्म्येकरथेन सत्यम्| त्यक्त्वा न वै कथमद्यापयातः कर्णाद् भीतो भीमसेनं विहाय ||...तेनाद्य तप्स्ये भृशमप्रमेयं यच्छत्रुवर्गे नरकं प्रविष्टः | नदैव वाच्योऽस्मि ननु त्वयाहं न योत्स्येऽहं सूतपुत्रं कथंचित्|| ततो नाहं सृञ्जयान् केकयांश्च समानयेयं सुहृदो रणाय |'.

He is already feeling as if he has been taken a prisoner by *Karna* even though he is with his own companions. Fie, that he is still alive which could be due to the sins committed by him - 'धिगस्तु मज्जीवितमद्य कृष्ण योऽहं वशं सूतपुत्रस्य यातः | मध्ये कुरूणां सुहृदां च मध्ये ये चाप्यन्ये योद्धुकामाः समेताः ||..मम ह्यभाग्यानि पुरा कृतानि पापानि नूनं बलवन्ति युद्धे | तृण च कृत्वा समरे भवन्तं ततोऽहमेवं निकृतो दुरात्मना | वैकर्तनेनैव तथा कृतोऽहं यथा ह्यशक्तः क्रियते ह्यबान्धवः ||'. Then in great desperation *Yudhishthira* reminds *Arjuna* that his chariot was fashioned by *Vishvakarma*, with *Hanuman* on his flag. Endowed with *Gandeev* for a bow & *Krishna* as his charioteer, how could he have come here frightened -'त्वष्ट्रा कृतं वाहमकूजनाक्षं शुभं समास्थाय कपिध्वजमुग्रम्| खड्गं गृहीत्वा हेमपट्टानवद्धं धनुश्चेदं गाण्डीव तालमात्रम्|| स केशवेनोह्यमानः कथं त्वं कर्णाद्भीतो व्यपयातोऽसि पार्थ |'. He rebukes him to hand over his *Gandeev* to *Krishna* or to any one else, himself become the charioteer so that any one of them may kill *Karna* 'धनुश्च तत्केशवाय प्रयच्छ यन्ता भविष्यस्त्वं रणे केशवस्य || तदाहनिष्यत् केशवः कर्णमुग्रं मरुत्पतिर्वृत्रमिवात्तवज्रः || राधेयमेनं यदि नाद्य शक्तश्चरन्तमुग्रं प्रतिबाधनाय || प्रयच्छान्यस्मै गाण्डीवमेतदद्य त्वत्तो योऽस्त्रैरभ्यधिको वा नरेन्द्रः ||'.

Hearing these unpleasant words, *Arjuna* flies in rage and drawing his sword rushes towards *Yudhishthira*. Reading his mind and realizing his intention *Krishna* stops him on his track and rebukes him whether he has lost his balance drawing the sword when no enemy in sight? *Kauravas* are being confronted by *Bhima* and he has come here to inquire *Yudhishthira's* health, who is safe and doing well 'युधिष्ठिरेणैवमुक्तः कौन्तेय श्वेतवाहनः | असिं जग्राह संक्रुद्धो जिघांसुर्भरतर्षभम्|| तस्य कोपं समुद्वीक्ष्य चित्तज्ञः केशवस्तदा | उवाच किमिदं पार्थ गृहीतः खड्ग इत्युतः || न हि पश्यामि योद्धव्यं त्वया किञ्चिद्धनंजय | ते ग्रस्ता धार्तराष्ट्रा हि भीमसेनेन धीमता || अपयातोऽसि कौन्तेय राजा द्रष्टव्य इत्यपि | स राजा भवता दृष्टः कुशली च युधिष्ठिरः ||. *Arjuna* fumes frowning angrily at *Yudhishthira* like a wounded serpent to sever the head of one who has asked him to hand over his *Gandeev* to some one else - 'अन्यस्मै देहि गाण्डीवमिति मां योऽभिचोदयेत्|| भिन्द्यामहं तस्य शिर इत्युपांशुव्रतं मम ||..समक्षं तव गोविन्द न तत्क्षन्तुमिहोत्सहे | तस्मादेनं वधिष्यामि राजानं धर्मभीरुम्||'.

Hearing these ignoble words *Krishna* berates him saying that he seems to have forgotten how to be respectful to elders, becoming angry with recklessness. How can he think of killing a righteous person like *Yudhishthira* having earlier taken vow to kill *Karna*, - 'धिग्धिगित्येव गोविन्द पार्थमुक्त्वाब्रवीत्पुनः || इदानीं पार्थ जानामि न वृद्धाः सेवितास्त्वया | काले न पुरुषव्याघ्र संरम्भं यद्भवानगात्||.. स कथं भ्रातरं ज्येष्ठं राजानं धर्मकोविदम्| हन्याद्भवान्नरश्रेष्ठ प्राकृतोऽन्यः पुमानिव ||..त्वया चैवं व्रतं पार्थ बालेनैव कृतं पुरा | तस्मादधर्मसंयुक्तं मौर्ख्यात्कर्म व्यवस्यसि ||'. Listening to these words spoken by *Krishna* a chastened *Arjuna* sheathes his sword. *Krishna* then tells *Arjuna* that *Yudhishthira* having been

feated by *Karna* was sad and tired though not engaged in fighting. Therefore, he spoke those angry ords, perhaps considering that if *Arjuna's* anger is aroused, he will fight *Karna* with all his heart. *dhishthira* knows that in the world there is no one other than *Arjuna* himself who could kill *Karna*.

Then as a compromise, Krishna suggests a way from this unpleasant turmoil, saying that in life 'ere is no greater mortification for a proud man than humiliation. Therefore, if *Arjuna* speaks to *dhishthira*, who is respected in all his life, addresses him by singular term it would be like death to him यदा मानं लभते माननार्हस्तदा स वै जीवति जीवलोके | यदावमानं लभते महान्तं तदा जीवन्मृत इत्युच्यते सः || . . त्वमित्यत्रभवन्तं हि ब्रूहि पार्थ युधिष्ठिरम्| ित्युक्तो हि निहतो गुरुर्भवति भारत | एवमाचर कौन्तेय धर्मराजे युधिष्ठिरे | अधर्मयुक्तं संयोगं कुरुष्वैनं करूद्वह ||.. वधं ह्ययं पाण्डव धर्मराजस्त्वत्तोऽयुक्तं वेत्स्यते ग्मेषः | ततोऽस्य पादावभिवाद्य पश्चात्समं ब्रूयाः सान्त्वयित्वा च पार्थम्||'.

Then *Arjuna* tells *Yudhishthira* that unlike a proud *Kshatriya*, his withdrawal from the battle eld defeated by *Karna* does not entitle him to hold others responsible. *Bhima* can call him names but *udhishthira* is certainly not competent to speak in that manner. *Brahmins* are great due to their wisdom nd *Kshatriyas* due to their strength, but *Yudhishthira* seems to be great only in speaking words of isdom. An unlucky player of games, they lost their kingdom because of his foolish adventure, and uffered humiliation. How can he now dare to hurt him with harsh words. When *Arjuna* completed his vords, it was enough to humiliate *Yudhishthira,* making him feel as good as dead, which resolved *rjuna's* vow to see him dead.

When Arjuna completes these words, he becomes sad, observing which *Krishna* consoles him nildly that why should he grieve when his mind is clear. *Arjuna* replies that having spoken words of ıumiliation, his body is burning with shame, wishing t kill himself, 'अहं हनिष्ये स्वशरीरमेव प्रसह्य येनहितमाचरं वै ||'. *Krishna* tells him that धर्म is subtle and difficult to be understood, especially when one's mind is obscured. t is true that killing one's own brother is worse but killing oneself is still worse 'राजानमेनं त्वमितीदमुक्त्वा किं कश्मलं ाविशः पार्थ घोरम्| त्वं चात्मानं हन्तुमिच्छस्यरिघ्न नेदं सद्भिः सेवितं वै किरीटिन्|| धर्मात्मानं भ्रातरं ज्येष्ठमद्य खड्गेन चैनं यदि हन्या नृवीर | धर्माद्भीतस्तत् कथं नाम ा स्यात्किंचोत्तरं वाक्करिष्यस्त्वमेव || सूक्ष्मो धर्मो दुर्विदश्चापि पार्थ विशेषतोऽज्ञैः प्रोच्यमानं निबोध | हत्वाऽऽत्मानमात्मना प्राप्नुयास्त्वं वधात्भ्रातुर्नरकं चातिघोरम्||'. *Krishna* then suggests a way out, asking him to praise his own self which is worse than committing suicide. *Arjuna* agrees to this suggestion and praises his own self and achievements, saying that leaving *Shankara* there is not other archer like him. Having conquered the quarters, he gives assurance to *Yudhishthira* that he will surely kill *Karna* to please him. *Krishna* has way with words and solution for every eventuality. Those were the days when *noblese oblige*, chivalry and righteous behaviour was slowly disappearing. The uncommon suggestions did not appear strange for *Pandavas* and therefore, *Krishna* was successful in convincing them, being noble when others would find and fail in seeing the great and perennial truths.

Yudhishthira was not, however, pacified, considering himself the source of trouble for them all. Therefore, he expresses his desire to renounce the world and go to the forests making *Bhima* to be the King in his place, 'भीमसेनस्तु राज मम जीवितेन न कार्यमद्यावमतस्य वीर | इत्येवमुक्त्वा महसोत्पपात राज ततस्तच्छयनं विहाय || इयेष निर्गन्तुमथो वनाय . .||'. Seeing the events taking unexpected turn, *Krishna* pacifies him saying that *Arjuna* was upset because of his suggestion to lay down the *Gandeev* bow. Therefore, he should condone his intransigence, with his firm resolve that that very day *Karna* will meet his death 'तस्मात्त्वं वै महाबाहो मम पार्थस्य चोभयोः || व्यतिक्रममिमं राजन्सत्यसंरक्षणं प्रति | शरणं त्वं महाराज प्रपन्नौ स्व उभवापि || क्षन्तुमर्हसि मे राजन्प्रणतस्याभियाचतः | राधेयस्याद्य पापस्य भूमिः पास्यति शोणितम्|'. *Arjuna* falls at the feet of his brother and asks to be pardoned 'ततोऽर्जुनो महाराज लज्जया वै समन्वितः | धर्मराजस्य चरणौ प्रपद्य शिरसा नतः | उवाच भरतश्रेष्ठं प्रसीदेति पुनः पुनः | क्षमस्व राजन्यत्प्रोक्तं धर्म कामेन भीरुणा ||'. *Yudhishthira* pardons him with love and affection.

Once the matter was resolved and peace and cordiality between them is established, *Krishna* and *Arjuna* get the chariot filled with weapons and proceed in search of *Karna* - 'कल्पतां मे रथो भूयो युज्यन्तां च्हा हयोत्तमाः | आयुधानि च सर्वाणि सज्जन्तां मे महारथे || उपवृत्ताश्च तुरगाः शिक्षिताश्चाश्वसादिभिः | रथोपकरणैः सज्जा उपायन्तु त्वरान्विताः ||'.

Chapter - XII

Taking *Yudhishthira's* permission, both *Arjuna* and *Krishna* set on their way to challenge *Karna.* On the way *Krishna* tells *Arjuna* not to underestimate *Karna* since he too is strong and skilled in many divine weapons in some aspects better than him. *Karna* who is difficult to be defeated even by gods has always hated and humiliated them on many occasions. *Duryodhana* thinks himself powerful with *Karna*, by his side - 'मावमंस्था महाबाहो कर्णमाहवशोभिनम्| कर्णो हि बलवान्दृप्तः कृतास्त्रश्च महारथः || कृती च चित्रयोधी च देशकालस्य कोविदः |..त्वत्समं तद्विशिष्टं वा कर्णं मन्ये महारथम्| परमं यत्नमास्थाय त्वया वध्यो महाहवे ||..सर्वैरवध्यो राधेयो देवैरपि सवासवैः | ऋते त्वामिति मे बुद्धिस्तदद्य जहि सूतजम्||..सदावजानाति हि पाण्डुपुत्रानसौ दर्पात्सूतपुत्रो दुरात्मा || आत्मानं मन्यते वीरं येन पापः सुयोधनः | तमद्य मूलं पापानां जहि सौतिं धनंजय ||'.

Krishna tells him there is no one else among *Pandavas* who could challenge *Karna.* 'को हि शक्तो रणे जेतुं कौरवांस्तान संयुगे | अन्यत्र पाण्डवान् युद्धे त्वया गुप्तान्महारथान्||..को हि शक्तो रणे पार्थ राजानां महारथौ | भीष्मद्रोणौ युधा जेतुं शक्रतुल्यपराक्रमौ ||..धार्तराष्ट्रमुदग्रं हि व्यूढं दृष्ट्वा महद्बलम्|| यदि त्वं भवेस्त्राता प्रतीयात्को नु मानवः |'. Therefore he should fight even as *Vishnu* did fought *asuras* and *danavas* in ancient days, since *Duryodhana* is aware of *Arjuna's* valour and has foisted the war on them along with *Krishna* taking *Karna's* help. The day *Bhishma* and *Drona* were killed, *Duryodhana* was good as dead. Therefore, He has to kill him, seeing him dead, *Kauravas* will surely mourn - 'मावमंस्था महाबाहो कर्णमाहवशोभिनम्| कर्णो हि बलवानदृप्तः कृतास्त्रश्च महारथः || कृती च चित्रयोधी च देशकालस्च कोविदः |..त्वत्समं तद्विशिष्टं वा कर्णं मन्ये महारथम्| परमं यत्नमास्थाय त्वया वध्यो महाहवे ||..सर्वैरवध्यो राधेयो देवैरपि सवासवैः | ऋते त्वामिति मे बुद्धिस्तदद्य जहि सूतजम्||..सदावजानाति हि पाण्डुपुत्रानसौ दर्पात्सूतपुत्रो दुरात्मा || आत्मानं मन्यते वीरं येन पापः सुयोधनः | तमद्य मूलं पापानां जहि सौतिं धनंजय ||...सेयं पार्थ चमूर्घोरा धार्तराष्ट्रस्य संयुगे || हतसर्वस्ववीरा हि भीष्मद्रोणौ यदा हतौ |..तांस्त्वमद्य नरव्याघ्र हत्वा पञ्च महारथान्|| हतामित्रः प्रयच्छोर्वी राज्ञे सद्वीपपत्तनाम्| एतां पुरा विष्णुरिव हत्वा दैतेयदानवान्|| प्रयच्छ मेदिनीं राज्ञे शक्रायेव हरिर्यथा |..एतत्ते सुकृतं कर्म नात्र किंचन युज्यते | वयमप्यनुजानीमो नात्र दोषोऽस्ति कश्चन ||..कर्ण माश्रित्य कौन्तेय धार्तराष्ट्रेण विग्रहः || रोचितो भवता सार्धं जानतापि बलं तव | कर्णो हि भाषते नित्यमहं पार्थान्समागतान्|| वासुदेवं च दाशार्हं विजेष्यामि महारथम्|..उग्रास्त्वद्भुजनिर्मुक्ता मर्म भित्वा महाशराः || अद्य कर्णं महावेगाः प्रेषयन्तु यमक्षयम्|'..

Listening *Krishna's* soothing words of enthusiasm and encouragement, *Arjuna* assures *Krishna* that when he is on his side there is nothing that can prevent him from killing *Karna*, people certainly remembering the day and this battle with *Karna,* as long as earth exists, leaving *Dhritarashtra* to lament the day he was crowned *Duryodhana* and *Kauravas* would run like frightened animals seeing the lion approach. *Karna's* death will make them all dispirited and listless, regretting the words of humiliation which they had spoken to *Draupadi,* 'स केशवस्य बीभत्सुः श्रुत्वा भारत भाषितम्| विशोकः सम्प्रहृष्टश्च क्षणेन समपद्यत ||..त्वत्सहायो ह्यहं कृष्ण त्रींल्लोकान्वै समागतान्| प्रापयेयं परं लोकं किमु कर्णं महाहवे ||..अद्य रात्रु स संग्रामो यत्र कर्णं मया हतम्| कथयिष्यन्ति भूतानि यावद्भूमिर्धरिष्यति ||..अद्य राजा धृतराष्ट्रः स्वां बुद्धिमवमंस्यते | दुर्योधनमराज्यार्हं यया राज्येऽभ्यषेचयत्||..अद्य दुर्योधनो राज्याज्जीविताच्च निराशकः | भविष्यति हते कर्णे कृष्ण सत्यं ब्रवीमि ते ||..अद्य तप्स्यति राधेयः पाञ्चालीं यत्तदाब्रवीत्| सभामध्ये वचः क्रूरं कुत्सयन्पाण्डवान्प्रति ||..अद्य कर्णे हते कृष्ण धार्तराष्ट्राः सराजकाः || विद्रवन्तु दिशो भीताः सिंहत्रस्ता मृगा इव |..अद्य केशव राधेयमहं हत्वा सबान्धवम्|| नन्दयिष्यामि राजानं धर्मपुत्रं युधिष्ठिरम्||..धनुर्वेदे मत्समो नास्ति लोके पराक्रमे वा मम कोऽस्ति तुल्यः | को वाप्यन्यो मत्समोऽस्ति क्षमावांस्तथा क्रोधे सदृशोऽन्यो न मेऽस्ति ||.. पाणी पृषत्का निशिता ममेमे धनुश्च दिव्यं विततं सबाणम्| पादौ च मे सरथौ सध्वजौ च न मादृशं युद्धगतं जयन्ति ||'.

Sanjaya reports that when *Arjuna* surveyed the *Kaurava's* battalions with an angry look with *Krishna*, fully resplendent with his conch and approaching them, *Shalya* announced their arrival to *Karna*, saying behold those whom he was seeking are swiftly coming towards him 'अयं स रथ आयाति श्वेताश्वः कृष्णसारथिम्| निघ्नन्नमित्रान्समरे यं कर्ण परिपृच्छसि ||..एतच्चक्रं गदा शङ्खः शार्ङ्गं कृष्णस्य च प्रभो | दृश्यते पाण्डवस्यैव वाहनास्य वाजिनः ||'. *Shalya* was thrilled in anticipation of a historical battle, even *Karna* as true charioteer acknowledging their arrival saying, 'प्रकृतिस्थोऽसि मे शल्य इदानीं सम्मतस्तथा | प्रतिभासि महाबाहो . .||'. *Shalya* encourages him to fight without any hesitation using his bow and arrow with firm determination remembering all the instructions given to him by *Parashurama*, 'दृष्टिं मुष्टिं च संधानं स्मृत्वा रामोपदेशजम्| धनंजयं जयप्रेप्सुः प्रत्युद्गच्छ महारथम्||'. He tells him to recall the humiliation which *Yudhishthira* felt when he fell form his chariot, the mortification of *Nakula-*

hadeva, Arjuna coming to him seething in anger. Among *Kauaravas* there is no one other than he who n challenge *Arjuna* with equal valour 'विरथं धर्मराजं तु दृष्ट्वा सुदृढविक्षतम्|..सहसैकरथः पार्थस्त्वामभ्येति परंतपः | क्रोधरक्तेक्षणः क्रुद्धो ांसुः सर्वपार्थिवान्|| त्वरितोऽभिपतत्यस्मांस्त्यक्त्वा सैन्यान्यसंशयम्| त्वं कर्ण प्रतियाह्येनं नास्त्यन्यो हि धनुर्धरः || न तं पश्यामि लोकेऽस्मिंस्त्वत्तो ह्यन्यं धनुर्धरम्| र्जुनं समरे क्रुद्धं यो वेलामिव धारयेत्|| न चास्य रक्षां पश्यामि पार्श्वतो न च पृष्टतः | एक एवाभियाति त्वां पश्य साफल्यमात्मनः ||..त्वं हि कृष्णौ रणे शक्तः ाधयितुमाहवे | तवैव भारो राधेय प्रत्युद्याहि धनंजयम्||..वासुदेवं च वार्ष्णेयं प्रीयमाणं किरीटिना | प्रत्युद्याहि महाबाहो पौरुषे महति स्थितः ||.

Karna graciously acknowledging *Shalya's* assessment that there has been no warrior like *rjuna*; he tells to observe his valour when he fights *Arjuna,* though is a matter of concern to see *Arjuna* great archer and *Krishna* renowned as wielder of discus - 'नैतादृशो जातु बभूव लोके रथोत्तमो यवदुपश्रुतं नः | तमीदृशं तयोत्स्यामि पार्थं महाहवे पश्य च पौरुषं मे ||..तमीदृशं वीर्यगुणोपपन्नं कृष्णद्वितीयं परमं नृपाणाम्| तमाह्वयन्साहसमुत्तमं वै जाने स्वयं सर्वलोकस्य शल्य ||..भयं मे वै ायते साध्वसं च दृष्ट्वा कृष्णवेकरथे समेतौ || अतीव पार्थो युधि कार्मुकिभ्यो नारायणश्चाप्रति चक्रयुद्धे | एवंविधौ पाण्डववासुदेवौ चलेत्स्वदेशाद्धिमवान्न कृष्णौ ||'. Expecting a great and heroic encounter with them, *Karna* becomes increasingly restless and nimated, *Duryodhana* arriving there to congratulate him, encourage his soldiers to assist him. *Arjuna* as shining like Sun when the world was on its way *Kauravas* being annihilated in the battle formation repared by *Arjuna* - 'शरार्चिषं गाण्डीवचारुमण्डलं युगान्तसूर्यप्रतिमानतेजसाम्||. But *Kauravas* could not see his brilliance ven as one with diseased eyesight can not see the Sun, 'न कौरवाः शेकुरुदीक्षितुं जयं यथा रविं व्याधितचक्षुषो जनाः ||'.

When the battle commences, *Kaurava* warriors were seen battling with *Bhima*, seeing which *rjuna* temporarily leaves *Karna* and goes to help his brother covering the space earlier occupied by irds with the shower of his arrow and killing many soldiers, - 'राजन्कुरूणां प्रवरैर्बलैर्भीममभिद्रुतम्| मज्जन्तमीव कौन्तेयमुज्जिहीर्षुर्धनंजयः || विसृज्य सूतपुत्रस्य सेनां भारत सायकैः | प्राहिणोन्मृत्युलोकाय परवीरान्धनंजयः || सर्पक्षिसंघतर्चाग्निमाकाशं पूरयञ्शरैः | धनंजयो महाबाहुः कुरूणामन्तकोऽभवत्||'. In the meanwhile, seeing *Dushasana* nearby, *Bhima's* blood surges to his head, recalling the vow taken by him when *Draupadi* was humiliated after their defeat in the dice game and he decides to fulfill that vow now. *Bhima* roars like wounded tiger saying that fortunately he has come in his presence for which moment he has been waiting to fulfill his promise with interest added thereon, 'दिष्ट्यासि दुःशासन मेऽद्य दृष्टः ऋणं प्रतीच्छे सहवृद्धिमूलम्| चिरोद्यतं यन्मया ते सभायां कृष्णाभिमर्शेन गृहाण मत्तः ||'. *Dushasana* too responds that he remembers every thing that has transpired between them, 'सर्वं स्मरे नैवा च विस्मरामि उदीर्यमाणं शृणु भीमसेन ||'. Then *Dushasana* throws insulting barbs at him saying their beloved *Druapadi* having married only one has sired her sons dishonorably from five brothers, even as their mother had given birth to them from different fathers. He reminds him *Draupadi* is their slave after she was lost by *Yudhishthira* in the game of dice, 'सम्भूय पार्थैस्तदनार्यवृत्तं कृतं तदा मातृकृतानुरूपम्|| एको वृतः पञ्चभिः साभिपन्ना ह्यलज्जमानैश्च परस्परस्य | स्मरे सभायां सुबलात्मजेन दासीकृताः स्थ सह कृष्णया च ||'. The battle between them ends up in ghastly and horrible display of vengeance and hatred both of them steering their chariots towards each other like *Indra* towards *Shambara*, as if both were staking their life on this encounter 'ततस्तयोर्युद्धमतीव दारुणं प्रदीव्यतो प्राणदुरोदरं द्वयो | परस्परेणाभिनिविष्टरोषयोरुदग्रयोः शम्बरशक्रयोर्यथा ||'.

Furious at these insults, *Bhima* surges charging him with fury unbound, breaking his bow and killing his charioteer *Dushasana* too hitting back and injuring him. Shaken but soon steadying himself, *Bhima* throws at *Dushasana* his massive mace with tremendous force declaring that time has come to drink his blood. Hit by the mace, *Dushasana* falls down on the ground with his armour completely shattered. *Bhima* then rushes towards him recalling all the indignities which were heaped on them and remembering the manner in which *Dushasana* had dragged *Draupadi* in the presence of the assembled rulers.

Then in the very presence of *Duryodhana* and *Karna,* reminding them of his vow to drink his blood, *Bhima* jumps down from his chariot and pouncing on *Dushasana* like a lion would pounce on an elephant pins him down 'भीमोऽपि वेगवत्तीर्य यानाद्दुःशास्नं वेगवानभ्यधावत्| ततः स्मृत्वा भीमसेनस्तरस्वी सापत्नकं यत्प्रयुक्तं सुतैस्ते ||..स्मृत्वाथ केशग्रहणं च देव्या वस्त्रापहारं च रजस्वलायाः |..दुःखानि दत्तान्यपि विप्रचिन्त्य || जज्वाल क्रोधादथ भीमसेन आज्यप्रसिक्तो हि यथा हुताशः ||..निहन्मि दुःशासनमद्य पापं संरक्षतामद्य समस्तयोधाः |'. Then drawing his sword, he presses it on *Dushnasana's* throat shouting him to remember the time when he was dancing around them calling *a bull, a bull* and to tell him which were

the hand by which he had dragged *Draupadi* by hair. Hearing these sharp words spoken by *Bhima*, an unabashed and audacious *Dushasana* even as he lay dying, haughtily and audaciously says with a sneer on his face, that the hands were the same as the one which he used to press women's breast as well have gave charities and deal the warriors on the battle field. They were the same that dragged *Draupadi* by her hair even as the *Kuru* elders and you all were seeing him helplessly 'अयं करिकराकारः पीनस्तनविमर्दनः गोसहस्रप्रदाता च क्षत्रियान्तकरः करः || अनेन याज्ञसेन्यां मे भीम केशा विकर्षिताः | पश्यतां कुरुमुख्यानां युष्माकं च सभासदाम्||'

Hearing these audacious words, *Bhima* severs *Dushasana's* both arms out of their sockets and hits him with the same severed arms. Then breaking the ribs of his chest, he begins drinking the hot blood spewing from his heart, saying that it is sweeter than mother's milk, honey and flower mixed drink or any milk products 'उत्कृत्य वक्षः पतितस्य भूमावथापिबच्छोणितमस्य कोष्टम्|..सत्यां चिकीर्षुर्मतिमान्प्रतिज्ञां भीमोऽपिबच्छोणितमस्य कोष्टम्| आस्वाद्य चास्वाद्य च वीक्षमाणः क्रुद्धो हि चैनं निजगादवाक्यम्|| स्तन्यस्य मातुर्मधुसर्पिषोर्वा माध्वीकपानस्य च सत्कृतस्य | दिव्यस्य वा तोयरसस्य पानात्पयोदधिभ्यां मथिताच्च मुख्यात्|| अन्यानि पानानि च यानि लोके सुधामृतस्वादुरसानि तेभ्यः | सर्वेभ्य एवाभ्यधिको रसोऽयं ममाद्य चास्याहितलोहितस्य ||'. Those who saw him shouting and dancing around *Dushasana's* body crept back in horror, challenging *Dushasana*, who was already dead, and challenging and calling him in loud voice, *a bull, a bull* again and again recalling every humiliations and sufferings which he had to face in his life 'एवं तवसौ राजपुत्रं निशम्य ब्रुवन्तमाजौ विनिपीड्य वक्षः | भैमो बलात्प्रतिगृह्य दोर्भ्यामुच्चैर्विनानदाय समस्तयोधान्||..एवं क्रुद्धो भीमसेनः करेण उत्पाटयामास भुजं महात्मा | दुःशासनं तेन स वीरमध्ये जघान वज्राशनिसंनिभेन || उत्कृत्य वक्षः पतितस्य भूमावथापिबच्छोणितमस्य कोष्टम्|..सत्यां चिकीर्षुर्मतिमान्प्रतिज्ञां भीमोऽपिबच्छोणितमस्य कोष्टम् आस्वाद्य चास्वाद्य च वीक्षमाणः क्रुद्धो हि चैनं निजगादवाक्यम्|| स्तन्यस्य मातुर्मधुसर्पिषोर्वा माध्वीकपानस्य च सत्कृतस्य | दिव्यस्य वा तोयरसस्य पानात् पयोदधिभ्या मथिताच्च मुख्यात्|| अन्यानि पानानि च यानि लोके सुधामृतस्वादुरसानि तेभ्यः | सर्वेभ्य एवाभ्यधिको रसोऽय ममाद्य चास्याहितलोहितस्य ||'. Then even as they were seeing this terrible deed, saying *this one is not a man but a rakshasa. Bhima* was continuing to dance around his body, *Bhima* turned to *Arjuna* and *Krishna* with a broad smile on his face, exulted in his booming voice and said, *'I have this day fulfilled my vow'* and feels satisfied as if he has offered oblation in a sacrifice - 'दुःशासने यद्रणे संश्रुतं मे तद्वै सत्यं कृतमद्येह वीरौ'.

Kauravas were disturbed by the manner in which *Dushasana* was killed. Even *Shalya* was shocked at *Bhima's* response, for once refraining from his offensive attitude towards *Karna* and encouraged him instead to fight like a lion-hearted warrior, for protection of *Kshatriya* righteousness and to fulfill the trust which *Duryodhana* has placed on him. He assures that once he wins, his fame will spread in this world and if he fails then in the heavens. Thus encouraged, *Karna* becomes well established in his resolve 'स त्वं पुरुषशार्दूल पौरुषेण समास्थितः | क्षत्रधर्मं पुरस्कृत्य प्रत्युद्याहि धनंजयम्|| भारो हि धार्तराष्ट्रेण त्वयी सर्वः समाहितः | तमुद्वह महाबाहो यथाशक्ति यथाबलम्|| जये स्याद्विपुला कीर्तिर्ध्रुवः स्वर्गः पराजये |'. *Krishna* and *Arjuna* too were stunned by the extreme display of *Bhima's* annoyance, but accept it as unavoidable consequence of *Bhima's* pent-up anger. Then they wait for *Karna* to fight the battle.

Seeing *Karna* come shining as the noon-day Sun, *Krishna* reminds *Arjuna* again that he is no mean warrior with *Shalya* manning his chariot. Therefore, he tells him that he should kill *Karna* without any daily - 'पश्य कर्ण समायान्तं धार्तराष्ट्रप्रियैषिणम्|| शरधारा विमुञ्चन्त धारासारमिवाम्बुदम्| एष मद्रेश्वरो राजा रथाग्रे पर्यवस्थितः || नियच्छति हयानस्य राधेयस्यामितौजसः ||..सर्वयत्नेन कौन्तेय हन्तुमर्हसि सूतजम्|| न हि कर्णशरानन्यः सोढुमुत्सहते नरः || सदेवासुरगन्धर्वास्त्रीँल्लोकान्सचराचरान्|| त्वं हि जेतुं रणे शक्तस्तथैव विदितं मम |'. *Arjuna* assures him with confidence he will surely win with *Krishna* is on his side. Therefore, he should lead the chariot swiftly so that he may not have to return without killing *Karna*. 'ध्रुव एव जयः कृष्ण मम नास्त्यत्र संशयः | सर्वलोकगुरुर्यस्त्वं तुष्टोऽसि मधुसूदन ||..न हत्वा समरे कर्णं निवर्तिष्यामि फाल्गुनः || अद्य कर्णं हतं पश्य मच्छरैः शकलीकृतम्| मां वा दक्ष्यसि गोविन्द कर्णेन निहतं शरैः || उपस्थितमिदं घोरं युद्धं त्रैलोक्यमोहनम्| यज्जनाः कथयिष्यन्ति यावद्भूमिर्धरिष्यति ||'. Even as he was speaking thus, he sees *Karna* coming towards him, both shining as two Suns or as *Indra* and *Shambara* or as *Vishnu* and *Shankara* people wondering who among them would win - 'तौ रथौ सूर्यसंकाशौ वैयाघ्रपरिवारितौ | समेतौ ददृशुस्तत्र द्वाविवार्कौ समुद्गतौ ||..संशयं सर्वभूतानां विजये समपद्यत | समेतौ पुरुषव्याघ्रौ प्रेक्ष्य कर्णधनञ्जयौ ||..विष्णुसमौ वीर्ये तथा भवसमौ युधि ||..तावकानां रणे कर्णो ग्लहो ह्यासीद्विशाम्पते | तथैव पाण्डवेयानां ग्लहः पार्थोऽभवत्तदा || त एव सभ्यास्तत्रासन्प्रेक्षकाश्चाभवन्स्म ते | तत्रैषां ग्लहमानानां ध्रुवौ जयपराजयौ ||'.

The contest between these two is described by *Vyasa* on a larger scale having overtones of epic

imension, where *divine intent* and *purpose* becoming the motivating force, the battle between *Bhima* nd *Dushasana* being the confrontation between the forces of *Light* and of *Darkness* in which the enizens of the heavens and nether worlds take sides, where gods, demons and all the elements of nature ike part on one side or the other 'गिरयः सागराश्चैव नद्यश्च सजलास्तथा || वृक्षाश्चौधयश्चैव व्याश्रयन्त किरीटिनम्| असुरा यातुधानाश्च धकाश्च परंतप || ते कर्णं समपद्यन्त हृष्टरूपाः समन्तता ||.. सर्वे देवगणाश्चैव सर्वभूतानि यानि च | यतः पार्थस्ततो देवा यतः कर्णस्ततोऽसुराः ||'. The battle eminds one of *Indra* and *Vrttra* between spiritual and the temporal 'समेतौ तौ महात्मानौ दृष्ट्वा कर्णधनंजयौ || अर्जुनो यता कर्णमिति शक्रोऽब्रवीत्तदा | जयतामर्जुनं कर्ण इति सूर्योऽभ्यभाषत ||', a game of dice being played between them 'ताभ्यां द्यूतं मासक्त विजयद्वयंतराय च | अस्मकं पाण्डवानां च स्थितानां रणमूर्धनि ||' result so unpredictable that it made one wonder and rgue who between them would, 'ततोऽन्तरिक्षे साक्षेपा विवादा भरतर्षभ | मिथो भेदाश्च भूतानामासन्कर्णार्जुनान्तरे ||'.

Even the gods were said to have been confused and confounded, approaching *Prajapati* for his iew, saying the world seems to be in suspense. *Indra* wonders how both could be successful, he having aid earlier that success of the two *Krishnas* is inevitable! 'कोऽनयोर्विजयी देव कुरुपाण्डवयोधयोः | समोऽस्तु विजयो देव एनयोर्न संहयोः || कर्णार्जुनविवादेन सर्वं संशयितं जगत्| स्वयंभो ब्रूहि नस्तथ्यमेतयोर्विजयं प्रभो || पूर्वं भगवता प्रोक्तं कृष्णयोर्विजयो ध्रुवः | तत् तथास्तु नमस्तेऽस्तु प्रसदि गवन्मम ||'. *Brahma Prajapati* says that *Arjuna's* success is indeed sure and certain and it is absolutely ecessary and feels satisfied as if he has offered oblation in a sacrifice, *Karna* should be defeated having ligned him with *danavas*. *Arjuna* is righteous, therefore his success is desirable. One whose charioteer s *Vishnu*, lord of the universe himself, how would his success not be logical? *Arjuna* will certainly ucceed but *Karna* too will gain fame in the worlds and like *Bhishma* and *Drona would* attain the region imilar to the *Vasus* 'विजयो ध्रुवमेवास्य विजयस्य महात्मनः |..कर्णस्य दानवा पक्ष अतः कार्यः पराजयः || एवं कृते भवेत् कार्यं देवानामेव निश्चितम्| आत्मकार्यं च सर्वेषां गरीयस्त्रिदशेश्वर ||..यस्य चक्रे स्वयं विष्णुः सारथ्यं जगतः प्रभुः | मनस्वी बलवाञ्शूरः कृतास्त्रोऽथ तपोधनः || बिभर्ति च महातेजा धनुर्वेदमशेषतः | पार्थः सर्वगुणपेतो देवकार्यमिदं यतः ||..कर्णो लोकानयं मुख्यानाप्नोतु पुरुषर्षभ | कर्णो वैकर्तनः शूरो विजयस्त्वस्तु कृष्णयोः || वसूनां समलोकत्वं मरुतां वा समाप्नुयात्| सहितो द्रोणभीष्माभ्यां नाकलोकमवाप्नुयात्||'.

Even *Karna* had pointed of the impending battle as a great *Yajna* with an unerring prophetic vision, in which *Duryodhana* has assembled many rulers, in which *Krishna* would be the *Witness* as well as the presiding priest, *Arjuna* would represent the masthead and various weapons would be the materials used in the sacrifice as well as the rites and rituals. He acknowledges that he has spoken many unpleasant and cruel words to *Pandavas*, which he regrets, that intransigence being redeemed only when he is killed by *Arjuna*. *Dushasana's* blood which *Bhima* would drink is like consuming सोम रस. When *Drona*, *Bhishma*, *Drishtadyumna* and *Shakuni* die, it will be the interval when the sacrifice will be stopped and the sacrifice will finally end when *Bhima* kills *Duryodhana*. When the wives, sons *Gandhari* and others shed tears on their death of their sons and husbands and the end of the funeral rites of the *Kaurvas* as the completion of the sacrifice.

When the battle between *Arjuna* and *Karna* begins, main contenders assess each other's strength and weakness, both the warriors as well as their charioteers casting their glances furiously on each other. *Karna* asks *Shalya* what he would do if *Arjuna* kills him in the battle, to which *Shalya* promptly replies that he would thereafter take up arms himself and kill both *Arjuna* and *Krishna*. Likewise when *Arjuna* asks *Krishna* what he would do in such event, *Krishna* dramatically assures him that Sun may change course, oceans may go dry, fire may become cold but *Karna* would never kill him. If *Karna* does win the battle, then world would surely come to an end, whereupon he himself will kill both *Karna* and *Shalya*. Hearing these words, *Arjuna* smiles and assures that such occasion will never arise since he is sure to kill *Karna* and *Shalya*. 'कर्णं चाप्यजयद्दृष्ट्या कुन्तिपुत्रो धनंजयः | अथाब्रवीत्सूतपुत्रः शल्यमाभाष्य सस्मितम्|| यदि पार्थो रणे हन्यादद्य मामिह कर्हिचित्| किं करिष्यसि सग्रामे शल्य सत्यमथोच्यताम्|| यदि कर्ण रणे हन्यादद्य त्वां श्वेतवाहनः | उभावेकरथेनाहं हन्यां माधवपाण्डवौ || एवमेव तु गोविन्दमर्जुनः प्रत्यभाषत | तं प्रहस्याब्रवीत् कृष्णः सत्यं पार्थमिदं वचः || एतेद्दिवाकरः स्थानाच्छुष्येदपि महोदधिः | शैत्यमग्निर्नियान्न त्वां हन्यात्कर्णो धनंजय || यदि चैतत्कथञ्चित्स्याल्लोकपर्यासनं भवेत्| हन्यां कर्णं तथा शल्यं बाहुभ्यामेव संयुगे ||.. अद्य ता मधुरा वाचः श्रोतासि मधुसूदन | दिष्ट्या जयसि वार्ष्णेय इति कर्णं निपातिते ||'.

The battle between *Arjuna* and *Karna* becomes comparable to one between gods and demons,

Arjuna and *Karna* shining as two resplendent Suns when the world is about to end 'बभूव युद्धं कुरुपाण्डवानां यथा सुराणामसुरैः सहभवत्|..महाधनुर्मण्डलमध्यगावुभौ सुवर्चसौ बाणसहस्रदीधिति | दिधक्षमाणौ सचराचरं जगद्युगान्तसूर्याविव दुःसहौ रणे ||'. Approbation from heavens were heard, *well done, well done* - 'ततोऽन्तरिक्षे सुरतूर्यनिस्वनाः ससाधुवादा हर्षितैः समीरिताः || निपेतुरप्युत्तमपुष्पवृष्टयः सुगन्धिगन्धाः पवनेरिताः शुभाः |'. *Duryodhana* or *Karna* seeing the wonderful spectacle were neither disheartened nor dissuaded from their purpose. *Ashavatthama* however was seen affectionately pressing *Duryodhana's* hand and counseling him to seek settlement because hatred brings no satisfactory conclusion, saying further that neither *Drona* nor *Bhishma* were spared from death in spite of their skill in warfare and *Kripa* and himself will never be saved from being killed. Therefore, it is better to reconcile and rule the kingdom with *Pandavas*, which they will never refuse, which *Krishna* would surely approve. Otherwise, every one would die with out having chance to repent - 'अथाब्रवीद्द्रोणसुतस्त्वमात्मजं करेण प्रतिपीड्य सान्त्वयन्|| प्रसीद दुर्योधन शाम्य पाण्डवैरलं विरोधेन धिगस्तु विग्रहम्|.. प्रशाधि राज्यं सह पाण्डवैश्चिरम्| धनंजयः शाम्यति वारितो मया जनार्दनो नैव विरोधमिच्छति ||.. त्वया तु पार्थैश्च कृते च संविदे प्रजाः शिवं प्राप्नुयुरिच्छया तव ||'. With *Dushasana's* death still rankling his mind, *Duryodhana* was in no mood to accept *Ashvatthama's* advise, telling him *Dushasana's* inhuman death by *Bhima* has caused him extreme pain, preventing any avenues for reconciliation. Therefore, he should not dampen *Karna's* spirit, especially when *Arjuna* is tired.

In the battle when *Karna* kills a *Panchala* prince *Kauravas* hail it with joy, which many misunderstand that *Arjuna* or *Krishna* were injured in the battle and have withdrawn. But soon *Arjuna's* arrows shower on *Karna*, which is received with acclamation from both sides 'भोः कर्ण साध्वर्जुन साधु चेति वियन्नु वाणी श्रूयते सर्वतोऽपि'. When *Karna* was about to discharge his next arrow, a *naga* prince *Vishvasen*, who had remained alive when *Khandava* forests were being burnt by *Arjuna*, takes hold of *Karna's* arrow with the intent to kill *Arjuna*. Seeing *Karna* not taking aim properly, *Shalya* points out that it will not sever *Arjuna's* neck unless it is aimed little higher 'न कर्ण ग्रीवामिषुरेष लप्स्यते समीक्ष्य संधत्स्व शरं शिरोघ्नम्||'. But having already drawn the string and taken aim, *Karna* refuses to let go the string and aim afresh, saying that it is against क्षत्र morality. The speeding arrow flies hissing like a snake towards *Arjuna*. When *Krishna* sees it coming he lowers the chariot slightly pressing the earth with his foot, 'तं प्रेक्ष्य दीप्तं युधि माधवस्तु त्वरान्वितः सत्वरयैव लीलयाऽ पदा विनिष्पिष्य रथोत्तमं स प्रावेशयत्पृथिवीं किंचिदेव ||'. The arrow misses its mark, sweeping *Arjuna's* crown instead, 'ततः शरः सोऽभ्यहनत्किरीटं तस्येन्द्रदत्तं सुहृदं च धीमतः | अथार्जुनस्योत्तमगात्रभूषणं धरावियद्द्योसलिलेषु विश्रुतम्||'. Disappointed *Vishvasena* returns back to *Karna*, requesting him to discharge the arrow again assuring sure success - 'मुक्तस्त्वयाहं त्वसमीक्ष्य कर्ण शिरो हृतं यन्न मयार्जुनस्य | समीक्ष्य मां मुञ्च रणे त्वमाशु हन्तास्मि शत्रुं तव चात्मनश्च ||' but *Karna* again refuses telling the *naga* that he does not desire to win the battles with some one else's help 'न नाग कर्णोऽद्य रणे परस्य बलं समास्थाय जयं बुभूषेत्|| न संदध्यां द्विः शरं चैव नाग यद्यर्जुनानां शतमेव हन्याम्|. The *naga* snubbed by *Karna* takes up on himself to strike *Arjuna* dead, but *Krishna* observing it coming asks *Arjuna* to kill the vengeful *naga* 'ततः कृष्णः पार्थमुवाच संख्ये महोरगं कृतवैरं जहि त्वम्||'. Once that was done, *Krishna* releases the pressure of his foot on the ground and lifts the chariot again 'हते च तस्मिन् भुजगे किरीटिना स्वयं विभुः पार्थिव भूतलादथ | समुज्जहाराशु पुनः पतन्तं रथं भुजाभ्यां पुरुषोत्तमस्ततः ||'.

Then the two warriors fight others so ferociously no one in particular seems to have an upper hand. When *Arjuna* shoots arrow, it flashes like *Yama's* scepter and *Agni's rod*, *Karna* staggering under the impact falling in his chariot, loosing his grip on the bow 'ततोऽर्जुनः कर्णमवकगैर्नवैः सुवर्णपुङ्खैः सुधृढैरयस्मयैः | यमाग्निदण्डप्रतिमैः स्तनान्तरे पराभिनत्क्रौञ्चमिवाद्रिमग्निजः || ततः शरावापमपास्य सूतजो धनुश्च तच्छक्रशरासनोपमम्| ततो रथस्थः समुमोह च स्खलन्प्रशीर्णमुष्टिः सुभृशाहतः प्रभो ||'. At that moment *Arjuna* stops shooting further arrows on *Karna*, *Krishna* screams at him for not expecting the next step in such crucial moment, saying one does not wait for an opportunity to defeat opponent but takes every opportunity to become successful. Therefore he should take this opportunity to kill *Karna* like *Vishnu* did kill *Namuchi*, without any hesitation, before he comes back to consciousness - 'न चार्जुनस्तं व्यसनं तदेपिवान्निहन्तुमार्य. पुरुषव्रते स्थित. | ततस्तमिन्द्रावरजः सुसम्भ्रमादुवाच किं पाण्डव हे प्रमाद्यसे || नैवाहितानां सततं विपश्चितः क्षणं प्रतीक्षन्त्यपि दुर्बलीयसाम्| विशेषतोऽरीन्व्यसनेषु पण्डितो निहत्य धर्मं च यशश्च विन्दते || तदेकवीरं तव चाहितं सदा त्वरस्व कर्णे सहसाभिमर्दितुम्| पुरा समर्थः समुपैति सूतजो भिन्धि त्वमेनं नमुचिं यथा हरिः ||'.

Arjuna agrees to *Krishna's* suggestion and shoots the powerful *Vatsadanta* arrow enveloping

arna and entire space around him. With his body smeared with blood *Karna* appeared as the red Sun :tting on the western horizon, 'सलोहितो रक्तगभस्तिमण्डलो दिवाकरोऽस्ताविमुखो यथा तथा ||'. But in spite of being hurt adly he rises up to return a powerful arrow injuring not only *Arjuna* but also *Krishna.* At that moment, ıe inexorable *Time* remaining concealed whispers to him that the time has come for him to die, even as *'arna* sees the wheels of his chariot sink in mire 'कालो ह्यदृश्यो नृप विप्रकोपान्निदर्शयन्कर्णवधं ब्रुवाणः | भूमिस्तु चक्रं पततिवांचतत्कर्णस्य तस्मिन्वधकाल आगते ||'. At that crucial moment *Karna* fails to recollect and remember the ivine weapons which *Parashurama* had endowed him with, 'ततस्तदस्त्रं मनमः प्रणष्टं यद्भार्गवोऽस्मै प्रददौ महात्मा | चक्रं च त्यं ग्रसते भूमिग्स्य प्राप्ते तस्मिन् वधकाले नृवीर ||'. His chariot continues to sink, wheels deeply stuck in the ground, 'ततो ‍ी घूर्णितवान्नरेन्द्र शापात्तदा ब्राह्मणासत्तमस्य | ततश्चक्रमपतत्तस्य भूमौ म विव्हलः समरे सूतपुत्रः ||'. Seeing these unexpected events appening so rapidly, *Karna* becomes exasperated exclaiming why he is being punished and not protect vhen wisdom declares that धर्म protects and he has always performed his actions following धम . He vonders whether धर्म protects at all, 'धर्मप्रधानं किल पाति धर्म इत्यब्रुवन् धर्मविदः मदैव | वयं च धर्मे प्रयताम नित्यं चर्तु यथाशक्ति यथा श्रुतं च || वापि निघ्नाति न पाति भक्तान्मन्ये न नित्यं परिपाति धर्मः ||'.

Even as he was using one weapon after another he realizes that *Arjuna* was far quicker to shoot ırrows making his own sight obscure and unclear. Even as he continues using more powerful weapons, *Irjuna* destroys them all making *Karna* stagger in his chariot confused and dazed, his wrist becoming veak and feeble. But in the continued shower of arrows, *Karna* becomes increasingly injured and weak, when *Krishna* advises *Arjuna* to use a powerful weapon on him without waiting for moment 'ततः कृष्णोऽर्जु ा दृष्ट्वा कर्णास्त्रेण च पीडितम् | अभ्यसोत्यब्रवीत्पार्थमनिष्ठमात्रं वजेति च ||'.

Even as *Arjuna* was contemplating discharging a sharp weapon, the wheel of *Karna's* chariot sinks further in the mire, whereupon he gets down from his chariot to extricate the same. Seeing the wheel stuck in the mire *Karna* becomes troubled and turning asks *Arjuna* to wait awhile till he extricates his wheel. He requests him as a noble warrior, not to walk on the path which ignoble ones tread 'भो भोः पार्थ महेष्वास मुहूर्तं परिपालय | यावच्चक्रमिदं ग्रस्तमुद्धरामि महीतलात्||..पार्थ कापुरुषाचीर्णमभिसंधिं विसर्जय ||..ख्यतस्त्वमसि कौन्तेय विशिष्टो ण्णकर्मसु ||..विशिष्टतरमेव त्वं कर्तुमर्हसि पाण्डव ||. He reminds *Arjuna* that weapons should not be used on one who is standing with his hair loosened as mark of surrender, has turned his face from fighting, has taken refuge with folded hands, has dropped his weapons, pleads for his life or whose weapons are all destroyed 'प्रकीर्णकेशे विमुखे ब्राह्मणेऽथ कृताञ्जलौ | शरणागते न्यस्तशस्त्रे याचमाने तथार्जन || अबाणे भ्रष्टकवचे भ्रष्टभग्नायुधे तथा || न विमुञ्चन्ति शस्त्राणि शूराः साधुव्रते स्थिताः |'. He lauds *Arjuna* as a renowned in scriptures and noble in character, brave warrior and skilled in weaponry and possessed of divine weapons, valorous like *Kartavirya* and well-established in *self.* Therefore, he should not shoot him till he lift the wheel from mire. It is not that he is frightened of him or *Krishna*, but as born one born a *Kshatriya* and glory to his family - 'त्वं च शूरतमो लोके साधुवृत्तश्च पाण्डव || अभिज्ञो युद्धधर्माणां वेदान्तावभृथाप्लुतः | दिव्यास्त्रविदमेयात्मा कार्तवीर्यसमो युधि || यावचक्रमिदं ग्रस्तमुद्धरामि महाभुज | न मां तथस्तो भूमिष्ठं विकलं हन्तुमर्हसि || त्वं हि क्षत्रियदायादो महाकुलविवर्धनः | अतस्त्वां प्रब्रवीम्येष महुर्तं क्षम पाण्डव ||'.

Krishna is one perfect practitioner of *real politik,* never mincing words when time comes to decide the most beneficial step. This was so when *Sanjaya* on an errand with *Dhritarashtra's* message had become bold to counsel the principles of righteousness to *Yudhishthira* and now when *Karna* voices words of righteousness and principles governing warfare. Therefore he sarcastically points out to *Karna* that he seems to remember धर्म only when he finds himself in troubles 'राधेय दिष्ट्या समरसीह धर्मम् | प्रायेण नीचा व्यसनेषु मग्ना निन्दन्ति दैवं कुकृतं न तु स्वम्||'. Then reminding him of all the indignities and humiliation heaped on *Pandavas*, he asks where was his righteousness then 'क्व ते धर्मस्तदा गतः |', when he had spoken words of humiliation to *Draupadi* saying that she should now marry some one else since *Pandavas* are destroyed or even when *Abhimanyu* was ploughed down by *Kauarava* warriors where was his righteousness, now that he remembers when he himself is and down and low! Therefore cease speaking of righteousness, since it saves him not now 'विनष्टाः पाण्डवाः कृष्णे शाश्वतं नरकं गताः | पतिमन्यं वृणीष्वेति व्दस्त्वं गजगामिनीम्|| उपप्रेक्ष्यसि राधेय क्व ते धर्म स्तदा गतः |..यदभिमन्युं बहवो युद्धे जघ्नुर्महारथाः | परिवार्य रणे बालं क्व ते धर्मस्तदा गतः || यद्येष धर्मस्तत्र न विद्यते हि किं सर्वथा तालुविशोषणेन | अद्योहं धर्म्या

णि विधत्स्व सूत तथापि जीवन्न विमोक्ष्यसे ||'. Thus rebuked by *Krishna*, *Karna* becomes ashamed and extremely agitated, and without speaking a word further continues to fight *Arjuna* with lips throbbing in anger.

Krishna then asks *Arjuna* to kill him with weapon as powerful as possible for him to shoot. Even as *Karna* angered by *Krishna's* rebuke, covers himself using *Brahmastra* to help extricate the wheel of his chariot *Arjuna* equally remembering all earlier humiliation uses similar *Brahmastra* to destroy the safeguard and injures him. Seeing this wonderful sight a storm begins blowing, mountains and forests start trembling, even gods expressing their concern, 'ववौ सशर्करो वायुर्दिशश्च रजसा वृताः | हाहाकारश्च संजज्ञे सुराणां दिवि भारत || तमिषुं संधितं दृष्ट्वा सूतपुत्रेण मारिष | विषादं परमं जग्मु पाण्डवाः दीनचेतसः ||'. While one of the powerful arrows dispatched by *Karna* benumbs *Arjuna* making him unsteady, during which time *Karna* gets down from his chariot to extricate the wheel but fails in his effort.

Krishna seeing *Arjuna* slowly regaining consciousness and seeing him taking aim, encourages him cut off *Karna's* head even before he could climb back his chariot 'छिन्ध्यस्य मूर्धानमरेः शरेण न यावदारोहति वै रथं वृषः ||'. *Arjuna* cuts his flag-mast and fixes an arrow, named *Anjalika*, shining like the rays of the Sun, *Indra's* thunderbolt and *Agni's* fiery weapon 'अथ त्वरन् कर्णवधाय पार्थो माहेन्द्रवज्रानलदण्डसन्निभम्| आदत्त चाथाञ्जलिकं निषङ्गात्सहस्ररश्मेरिव रश्मिमुत्तमम्||'. The arrow shears off *Karna's* head, even as the Sun sets on the western horizon, red as the head full of blood fell down 'तत्पापतच्चाञ्जलिकेन छिन्नमथास्य कायो निपतता पश्चात्| तदुद्यतादित्यसमानतेजसं शरन्नभोमध्यगभास्करोपमम्|| वराङ्गमुर्व्यामपतच्चमूमुखे दिवाकरोऽस्तादिव रक्तमण्डलः |'and seeing his brave son fallen on the battle field, Sun red in his face slowly sinks in the western horizon 'कर्णं दृष्ट्वा भुवि निपतितं पार्थबाणाभितप्तम्| पाण्डुग्रस्तं मलिनमसकृत्पुत्रमन्वीक्षमाणो मन्दं मन्दं व्रजति सविता मन्दिरं मन्दरश्मिः ||'. Seeing *Karna's* body fall, *Shalya* too leaves the place in post haste 'कर्णं तु शूरं पतितं पृथिव्यां शराचितं शोणितदिग्धगात्रम्| दृष्ट्वा शयानं भुवि मद्रराजश्छिन्नध्वजेनाथ ययौ रथेन ||'.

Seeing *Karna's* **body lying** on the battle field, *Krishna* embraced *Arjuna*, complimented that he has killed *Karna* **even as** *Indra* killed *Vritra*, in olden days. *Arjuna* was happy having fulfilled his vow. *Yudhsishthira* **who had** come on the battle field to see his valour but being tired has retired to his camp would now be happy seeing him fulfilling his vow 'हतो वज्रभृता वृत्रस्त्वया कर्णो धनंजय | वृत्रकर्णवधं घोरं कथयिष्यन्ति मानवाः || त्वमिमं विक्रमं लोके प्रथितं ते यशस्करम्| निवेदयावः कौन्तेय कुरुराजस्य धीमतः || वध कर्णस्य संग्रामे दीर्घकालचिकीर्षितम्| निवेद्य धर्मराजाय त्वमानृण्यं गमिष्यसि || वर्तमाने महायुद्धे तव कर्णस्य चोभयोः | द्रष्टुमायोधनं पूर्वमागतो धर्मनन्दनः || भृशं तु गाढविद्धत्वान्नाशकत्स्थातुमाहवे | ततः स शिबिरं गत्वा स्थितवान्पुरुषर्षभः ||'. *Karna's* death left a great psychological blow to the *Kauravas* even as *Vritra's* death had a great impact on society, recollected and remembered since then. *Duryodhana* and others gathered around his body, some pleased and others displeased, some wondering and others confounded and frightened of *Bhima's* fury seeing him give a triumphant roar. Even as *Duryodhana's* soldiers were fleeing frightened of *Bhima*, he brave and audacious as ever, instructs his charioteer to follow *Arjuna* hoping to kill him, along with *Krishna* and *Bhima* 'सम्प्रेक्ष्य दैवात् सर्वानर्भीमसेनभयार्दितान्| दुर्योधनोऽथ स्वं सूतं हा हा कृत्वेदमब्रवीत्|| नातिक्रमिष्यते मां पार्थो धनुष्पाणिमवस्थितम्| जघने सर्वसैन्यानां शनैः सूत प्रचोदय || युध्यमानं हि कौन्तेय हनिष्यामि न संशयः | नोत्सहेत्सागरं तीर्त्वा वेलामिव महोदधिः || अद्यार्जुनं सगोविन्दं मानिनं च वृकोदरम्| हत्वा शिष्टानरीनय शत्रून् कर्णस्यानृण्यमाप्नुयाम्||'.

While narrating the events, *Sanjaya* describes the grief and disappointment which *Duryodhana* experienced. Yet bold and courageous that he was, seeing his army disheartened and frightened, he encourages them that he does not see any place where they may feel safe from *Arjuna* and *Bhima*, therefore, it is no use deserting the field. Among the enemies even *Krishna* and *Arjuna* are injured, therefore if they pursue them victory my be at hand 'ततोऽपश्यन्महात्मा स स्वसैन्यं भृशदुःखितम्| ततोऽवस्थाप्य राजेन्द्र कृतबुद्धिस्तवात्मजः || हर्षयन्निव तान्योधानिदं वचनमब्रवीत्|| न तं देशं प्रपश्यामि यत्र याता भयार्दिताः || गतानां यत्र वै मोक्षः पाण्डवात्किं गतेन वः | अल्पं च बलमेतेषां कृष्णौ च भृशविक्षतौ || अद्य सर्वान्हनिष्यामि ध्रुवो हि विजयो भवेत्|..अनुसृत्य वधिष्यन्ति श्रेयान्नः समरे वधः |..सुखः सांग्रामिको मृत्युः क्षत्रधर्मेण युध्यताम्||'. But his words had lost their vigour and he saw his frightened soldiers run away from the battle field.

Kaurava warriors greatly disappointed and disheartened return to their camps even as *Pandavas* reach their camps in jubilation, blowing their conches loud and clear. *Sanjaya* becomes lyrical in describing the events that followed *Karna's* death, rivers stopped to flow, Sun sank in the

stern horizon, moon hesitatingly rose in the sky, even luminous like *Surya* and *Agni*, earth quacked split the earth, quarters and directions were aflame, with oceans tossing tempestuous 'हते कर्णे सरितो न तेगम चास्त सविता दिवकरः | ग्रहश्च तिर्यग्ज्वलनाकर्णः सोमस्य तिर्यग्ज्वलनार्कवर्णः सोमस्य पुत्राभ्युदियाय तिर्यक्|| नभः पफालेव ननाद चोर्वि ववुश्च वाताः गाः सुघोराः | दिशो बभूवुर्ज्वलिताः सधूमा महार्णवाः सस्वनुश्चुक्षुभुश्च || सकाननाशचाद्रिचयाश्चकम्पिरे प्रविव्ययुर्भूतगणाश्च सर्वे |..पपात चोल्का ज्वलनप्रकाशा चराश्चाप्यभवन्प्रहृष्टाः ||'. Only *Krishna* and *Arjuna* appeared resplendent and fearless like *Vishnu* and *Indra*, their conches reverberating the space forcing *Kauarva* armies to disperse leaving *Shalya* and *Duryodhana* alone on the battle field 'ततो धनुर्ज्यातलगाणानिःस्वने प्रसह्यकृत्वा च रिपून्हतप्रभान्| संछादयित्वा तु कुरून्शरोत्तमैः कपिध्वजः वागध्वजश्च || चुचुम्बतुः शङ्खवरौ नृणां वरौ वराननाभ्यां युगपच्च दध्मतुः ||..तौ शङ्खशब्देन निनादयन्तौ वनानि शैलान्सरितो गुहाश्च | वित्रासयन्तौ तव सेनां युधिष्ठिरं नन्दयतां वरिष्ठौ ||'. Sanjaya remarks that with *Karna's death*, *Kauaravas* felt robbed of their wealth, women and dominance 'हते कार्णे महाराज निराशाः कुरवोऽभवन्| जीवितेष्वपि राज्येषु दारेषु च धनेषु च ||'.

Then *Krishna* advised *Arjuna* and his brothers on the field to remain on their guard till *Karna's* death is reported to *Yudhishthira*, 'यावदावेद्यते राज्ञे हतः कर्णोऽर्जुनेन वै | तावद्भवद्भिर्यत्तैस्तु भवितव्यं नराधिपैः ||'. Seeing them approach smilingly, *Yudhishthira* happy that *Karna* is killed embraces both *Krishna* and *Arjuna* affectionately and replied that by *divine will* they are all safe and inquired *Krishna* for the further steps to be taken. *Krishna* acknowledges that *divine will* has truly played an important part and that even by that *divine will* alone he will surely be a great ruler. Hearing these pleasant words, *Yudhishthira* said that it was no wonder that success should have been theirs, seeing that he was *Arjuna's* charioteer, both being none other than नर and नारायण - 'नैतच्चित्रं महाबाहो त्वयी देवकीनन्दन | त्वया सारथीना पार्थो यत्नवानहनश्च | न तच्चित्रं महाबाहो मद्बुद्धिप्रमादजम्||..नरनारायणौ देवौ कथितो नारदेन मे | धर्मात्मानौ पुराणवृषिसत्तमौ ||..जीविते चैव राज्ये च हते राधात्मजे रणे | त्वत्प्रसादात्वयं चैव कृथार्ताः पर्ययंभ || '.

Then go to the place where *Karna* lay dead, with thousand of arrows stuck to his body as if fragrant flowers are strewn or thousands lamps are illuminated 'यथा कदम्बकुसुमं केसरैः सर्वतो वृतम्| चितं शरशतैः कर्णं धर्मजो ददर्श सः || गन्धतैलावसिक्ताभिः काञ्चनाभिः सहस्रशः | दीपिकाभिः कृतोद्यतं पश्यते वै वृषं तदा ||'. They thank their good fortune for their success, after having suffered for thirteen years and future being safe, 'अद्य राजास्मि गोविन्द पृथिव्यां भातृभिः सह | त्वया नाथेन वीरेण विदुषा परिपालितः || ..दिष्ट्या जयसि गोविन्द दिष्ट्या शत्रुर्निपातितः | दिष्ट्या गाण्डीवधन्वा च विजयी पाण्डुनन्दन || त्रयोदश समास्तीर्णा जागरेण सुदाःखिताः | स्वप्स्यामोऽद्य सुखं रात्रौ त्वत्प्रसादान्महाभुज ||'. When *Dhritarashtra* hears of *Karna's* death, he remarks that *Pandavas* will kill every one whom *Kauravas* appoint to lead their armies. He recalls *Vidura* telling him that *Duryodhana* would bring the family to ruin. In life there are surely some who seeing, see not, and regretfully he himself seems as one of them for not listening *Vidura* - 'यं यं सेनप्रणेतारं युधि कुर्वन्ति मामकाः || अचिरेण कालेन तं तं निघ्नन्ति पाण्डवाः|.. केचिन्न सम्यक् पश्यन्ति मूढाः सम्यगवेक्ष्य च | तदिदं मम मूढस्य तथाभूतं वचः स्म तत्|| यदब्रवीन्स धर्मात्मा विदुरो दीर्घदर्शिवान्| तत्तथा समनुप्राप्तं वचनं सत्यवादिनः ||'. Saying thus he fell down unconscious, even as *Gandhari* tending him mourned *Karna's* death. *Duryodhana* was inconsolable and falling down in depression, wailing *alas Karna, alas Karna*, soon rose up considering the *divine will* thought of continuing the battle further.

Karna's death transforms the entire face and character of the war. After brief period of despondency and sorrow, 'ततः कर्णे हते राजन्धार्तराष्ट्रः सुयोधनः | भृशं शोकार्णवे मग्नो निराशः सर्वतोऽभवत्|| हा कर्ण हा कर्ण इति शोचमानः पुनः पुनः | कश्च्छ्रात्स्वशिबिरं प्राप्तो हतशेषैर्नृपैः सह ||'. *Duryodhana* considering death as *divine will*, decides to contune the fight under *Shalya's* leadership 'स दैवं बलवन्मत्वा भवितव्यं च पार्थिवः | संग्रामे निश्चयं कृत्वा पुनर्युद्धाय निर्ययौ || शल्यं सेनापतिं कृत्वा वैधिवद्राजपुङ्गवः | रणाय निर्ययौ राजा हतशेषैः सह ||', encouraging his soldiers to fight valiantly and with vigour, and they too proceed to meet their certain death 'ततो बलानि सर्वाणि हतशिष्टानि भारत | प्रस्थितानि व्यदृश्यन्त मरत्युं कृत्वा निवर्तनम् ||'. *Sanjuya* too reports to *Dhritarashtra* that all the events were as per divine will, *Duryodhana* beimg defeated in spite of well equipped and well-armed 'विधिश्च बलवानत्र पौरुषं तु निरर्थकम्| शकतुल्यावलाः सर्वे यथावध्यत पाण्डवैः ||'. *Dhritarashtra* also laments that whomsoever his son appotns to lead his army all those end up killed by *Pandavas*, *Bhishma*, *Drona* abd *Karna* being killed in most unexpected manner. He recalls what *Vidura* had told him that *Duryodhana* would be the cause of destruction of great many people. It is not strange that in life there are some florish people who seeing do not see, hehimself beinf one such one. Therefore he finds the effect in the same as one could expect. It seems that every thing that us

happening for not having listened to *Vidura's* wise conunsel 'कंचिन्न मम्यकपश्यन्ति मूढाः सम्यगवेक्ष्य च | तदिदं मम मूढस्य तथाभूतं वचः स्म तत् || यदब्रवीत्स धर्मात्मा विदुरो दीर्घदर्शिवान् | त्तथा समनुप्राप्तं वचनं सत्यवादिनः ||'.

At this stage *Kripacharya* comes to console affectionately that for *Kshatriya* there no other enterprise than fighting battle and either win or die on the battle field because running away brings no merit. *Bhishma, Drona, Karna* and even his son *Lakshmana* are dead and, therefore, should reflect for whose sake is he continuing the battle? When they were all alive *Arjuna* could not be defeated, how then can he hope to defeat one who is dear to *Krishna* and could not be defeated even by gods. For his sake all the rulers had gathered on the battle field but now even *Duryodhana's* life is in danger. He counsels him to save his own life for that alone is the instrument for all happiness. He reminded to him *Brihaspati's* advise that when one's strength is weak or is not comparable to the enemy, one should sue for conciliation. *Kauaravas* have become weaker than the *Pandavas*. Therefore, according to him in the present circumstances settlement is the most desirable course. *Yudhishthira* is compassionate and with *Krishna's* approval, he will surely allow him to be get back his kingdom and others also will consent to the settlement. He is sure that *Krishna will not refuse Dhritarashtra's desire or Yudhishthira, Krishna's* command. This alone is good for him and not continuation of the war, otherwise a time will come for him to rue - 'दुर्योधन निबोधेदं यत्त्वां वक्षामि कौरव | श्रुत्वा कुरु महाराज यदि ते रोचते || न युद्धधर्माच्छ्रेयान्वै पन्था राजेन्द्र विद्यते | यं समाश्रित्य युद्ध्यन्त क्षत्रियाः क्षत्रियर्षभ || वधे चैव परो धर्मस्तथाधर्म पलायने | ते स्म घोरं समापन्ना जीविकां जीविनार्थिनः ||..सर्वैरथ च जीवद्भिर्बीभत्सुरपराजितः | कृष्णनेत्रो महाबाहुर्देवैरपि दुरासदः ||..आत्मनोऽर्थे त्वया लोको यत्नतः सर्व आहृतः | स ते संशयितस्तात आत्मा वै भरतर्षभ || रक्ष दुर्योधनात्मानमात्मा सर्वस्य भाजनम् | भिन्ने हि भाजने तात दिशो गच्छति तद्गतम्||..हीयमानेन वै सन्धिः पर्येष्टव्यः समेन वा | विग्रहो वर्धमानेन मतिरेषा बृहस्पतेः || ते वयं पाण्डुपुत्रेभ्यो हीना स्म बलशक्तितः | तदत्र पाण्डवैः सार्धं सन्धिं मन्ये क्षमं प्रभो ||..वैचित्रवान्क्षमाशीलो युधिष्ठिरः | विनियुञ्जित राज्ये त्वां गोविन्दवचनेन च || नातिक्रमिष्यते कृष्णो वचनं कौरवस्य तु | धृतराष्ट्रस्य मन्येऽहं नापि कृष्णस्य पाण्डवः ||..एतत्क्षममहं मन्ये न च पार्थैश्च विग्रहम्|| न त्वां ब्रवीमि कार्पन्यान्न प्राणपरिरक्षणात्|| पथ्यं ब्रवीमि त्वां तत्परासुः स्मरिष्यसि |'.

Therefore he replies *Kripa*, his preceptor with candour and vehemence that having ruled over many kings how can he now serve under *Yudhishthira*? Having enjoyed various pleasures and having given in charities much wealth how can he now live on crumbs dropped by others? He accepts that what *Kripa* speaks is undoubtedly from affection for him but according to him the time for settlement is passed and continuing the battle struggle in the most effective manner would be proper thing to do. This is not the time to become diffident but fight with full confidence. Having won many alien nations and having ruled over kingdom wisely, having enjoyed many pleasures and women, *Duryodhana* feels confident that he has fulfilled his debt to his ancestor as well as to क्षत्रधर्म. After all pleasures are transient, then why speak about kingdom? Therefore one should think of one's renown and it will be possible only though struggling. Death for a warrior in his residence is considered in fame and demerit. Therefore, he will gain heavenly worlds by conquering these temporal worlds by fighting and not in any other manner - 'उपर्युपरि राज्ञां वै ज्वलित्वा भास्करो यथा || युधिष्ठिरं कथं पश्चादनुयास्यामि दासवत्| कथ भुक्त्वा स्वय भोगान्दत्वा दायाश्च पुष्कलान्|| कृपणं वर्तयिष्यमि कृपणैः सह जीविकाम्| नाभ्यसूयामि ते वाक्यमुक्तं स्निग्धं हितं त्वया || न तु सन्धिमहं मन्ये प्राप्तकालं कथञ्चन | सुनीतमनुपश्यामि सुयुद्धेन परंतप || नायं क्लीबयितु कालः संयोद्धुं काल एव नः |..जितानि परराष्ट्राणि स्वराष्ट्रमनुपालितम्|| भुक्ताश्च विविधा भोगास्त्रिवर्गः सेवितो मया | पितृणा गतमानृण्य क्षत्रधर्मस्य चोभयोः || न ध्रुवं सुखमास्तीति कुतो राष्ट्रं कुतो यशः | इह कीर्तिर्विधातव्या सा च युद्धेन नान्यथा || गृहे यत्क्षत्रियस्यापि निधनं तद् विगर्हितम्| अधर्मः सुमहानेष यच्छय्यामरणं गृहे || सोऽहमेतादृशं कृत्वा जगतोऽस्य पराभवम्| सुयुद्धेन ततः सवर्ग प्राप्स्यामि न तदन्यथा ||'. He said how can he live to rule without his brothers and companions on his side - 'येमदर्थे हताः शूरस्तेषां कृतमनुस्मरन्| ऋणं तत्प्रतियुञ्जानो न राज्ये मन आदधे || किदृशं च भवेद्राज्यं मम हीनय बन्धुभिः | सखिभिश्च विशेषेण प्रणिपत्य च पाण्डवम्|| सोऽहमेतादृशं कृत्वा जगतोऽस्य पराभवम्| सुयुध्येन ततः स्वर्गं प्राप्यस्यामि न तदन्यथा ||'.

Vyasa, both *Pandavas* and *Kauravas* being dear to him, knows the noble actions performed by *Pandavas* and the overwhelming ignoble actions performed by *Kauravas*, each responding to their own attributes and inclinations born of nature. *Vyasa* is placing a mirror in front of life as it moves pointing out the *divine intent* and *purpose* which exists behind all the events that transpire, depicting all the shades and colours, nothing being either white or black, nothing included or nothing left out, nothing accepted or nothing rejected, life being a greater leveler of diverse forms, attributes and inclinations,

refore, validating the statement 'धर्मे चार्थे च कामे च मोक्षे च भरतर्षभ | यदिहास्ति तदन्यत्र यन्नेहास्ति न कुत्राचित्||' - whatever has n spoken in *Mahabharata* is to be found even elsewhere and whatever is not spoken in this scripture not be found any where else. Therefore, it is no wonder that he should lament, 'ऊधर्वबाहुर्विरौम्येष न च च्छुणोति मे | धर्मादर्थश्च कामश्च स किमर्थं न सेव्यते || ' - when he has been declaring with his both uplifted hands but no seams to be listening to that deliverance is possible to be founded on *Dharma*, enterprise and desire, y do they not accept ?

The difficulty perhaps lies in the scripture itself since *Vyasa* has himself concealed the truths in ny places, which by his own admission he knows as well as *Shuka* his son, but does not know whether *njaya* knows or does not know 'ग्रंथार्गन्थिं तदा चक्रे मुनिगूढं कुतूहलात्| अस्मिन्प्रतिज्ञया प्राह मुनिर्द्वैपायनविदम्|| अष्टौ श्लोकसहस्राणि अष्टौ कशतानि च | अहं वेद्मि शुको वेत्ति संजयो वेत्ति वा न वा || तच्छ्लोककूटमद्यापि ग्रथितं सुदृढं मुने | भेत्तुं न शक्यतेऽर्थस्य गूढत्वात्प्रश्रितस्य च ||'. erefore, though one perceives *samsara*, the primordial world, being the consequential by-product of nsory influences on human mind, every thing seen as dual, like good and bad, noble and ignoble, auty and ugly, the right and the wrong, righteousness as unrighteousness and unrighteousness as hteousness, giving rise to the central thesis that every thing and all things in creation as the effulgent anifested creation सृष्टि being illusory reflection of one core central, eternal, un-variable mprehensive, whole, complete and entirety of the non dual *Prime Existence.* If *Vyasa* had to tell even *anapati* to understand the meaning fully before he records the verses 'तच्छ्लोककष्टमद्यापि ग्रथितं सुदृढं मुने | भेत्तुं न क्यतेऽर्थस्य गूढत्वात्प्रश्रितस्य च ||', it would be reasonable to expect that for human mind it may be difficult to ravel the same without perseverance and penance.

Duryodhana, who could not fathom the mystery being obscure in mind, as misguided and rogant, as one though fallen but not yet beaten, an anti-hero built in classical mould, does not listen to *ripa's* sage advice, perhaps fearing the *Pandavas* would sure to take revenge remembering the dignities, humiliation and sufferings which he has caused to them. He tells *Kripa* that he has spoken hatever a well wisher should speak, besides having fought for him without any attachment to his own fe. But his words are not agreeable to him like medicine witch is not palatable to a dieing person. *rishna* had come to him as an envoy but even he was treated ungraciously. That was indeed his noughtless indiscretion, how then can he expect to be pardoned? *Krishna* was unhappy seeing *raupadi* humiliated. He had heard that *Krishna* and *Arjuna* had two bodies but one heart, which fact he as now seen and experienced. Having seen *Abhimanyu,* his nephew killed immorally, he would not neither remain quiet nor *Arjuna* would favorable state of mind 'यत्किञ्चनसुहृदा वाच्यं तत्सर्वं श्रावितो ह्यहम्| कृतं च भवता र्वं प्राणान्संत्यज्य युध्यता ||.. न मां प्रीणाति तत्सर्वं मुमूर्षोरिव भेषजम्|| राज्यादविनिकृतोऽस्माभिः कथं सोऽस्मासु विश्वसेत्| अक्षद्यूते च नृपतिर्जितोऽस्माभिर्म धनः || स कथं मम वाक्यानि श्रद्दध्याद्भूय एव तु | तथा दौत्येन संप्राप्तः कृष्णः पार्थहिते रतः || प्रलब्धश्च हृषीकेशस्तच्च कर्माविचारितम्| स च मे वचनं स्मन्कथमेवाभिमन्यते || विललाप च यत् कृष्णा सभामध्ये समेयुषी | न तन्मर्षयते कृष्णो न राज्यहरणं तथा || एकप्राणावुभौ कृष्णावन्योन्यमभिसंश्रितौ | पुरा च्छ्रुतमेवासीदद्य पश्यामि तत्प्रभो || स्वस्रीयं निहतं श्रुत्वा दुःस्वं स्वपिति केशवः | कृतागसो वयं तस्य स मदर्थं कथं क्षमेत्||..स कथं मद्धिते यत्नं प्रकरिष्यति याचितः ||'.

Duryodhana's oration should be seen in proper perspective. Normally anti-heroes are condemned at the very outset, rarely giving them opportunity to explain or for others to assess and appraise their response in the manner in which they react. *Duryodhana* was not an ordinary human being but a proud one, though his pride often becomes arrogance as a scion of the great *Kuru* family. A proud warrior born to rule though not wisely and well, a friend to his like-minded associate he does not desire to leave them, who having been his well-wisher has laid their life for his sake. Having been influenced by the material philosopher, *Brihaspati*, he did neither succumb to temporal failures not was he influenced by *Krishna's* spiritual status, accepting him only as a great human being seeing his actions from human angle, suspicious of his righteous advise but susceptible to evil propensities, proud like *Vrittra* and arrogant like *Ravana,* his speech and action fully reflecting his गुण and स्वभाव.

Therefore, instead of seeing possible defeat he considers continuing the battle and appoints

Shalya to lead his army. But *Shalya* becomes more conceited, arrogant and self confident of his own worth. His pride swells when he is informed that it was *Ashvatthama* who suggested his name praising his valour and especially his joining *Kauravas* abandoning his own nephews- 'अयं कुलेन रूपेण तेजसा यशसा श्रिया | सर्वगुणैः समुदितः शल्यो नोऽस्तु चमूपतिः || भागिनेयान् निजांस्त्यक्त्वा कृतज्ञोऽस्मानुपगतः | महासेनो महाबाहुर्महासेन इवापरः ||'. Flushed with excessive praise, he assures *Duryodhana* not to fear since *Krishna* and *Arjuna* are not as great warriors as he is. Be assured that when he becomes angry even gods and *asuras* cannot stand before him, then what to speak of *Pandavas*? They will see his strong bow and his brave deeds, performing actions far exceeding those performed even by *Bhishma*, *Drona* or *Karna* 'दुर्योधन महाबाहो श्रुणु वाक्यमिदं वर | यवेनौ मन्यसे कृष्णौ रथस्थौ रथिनां वरौ || न मे तुल्यावुभावेतौ बहुवीर्ये कथंचन | उद्यतां पृथिवीं सर्वां ससुरासुरमानवाम्| योधयेयं रणमुखे सक्रुद्धः किमु पाण्डवान्|| विजयेष्यामि रणे पार्थान्सोमकांश्च समागतान्|'. In spite of these brave words, *Duryodhana* could not reconcile himself to *Karna's* absence.

Seeing *Shalya* appointed, *Yudhishthira* asks *Krishna* to guide him what would be the suitable thing to do. *Krishna* comforts him saying that he is familiar with *Shalya* for many years as a warrior skilled in many weapons, equal to *Bhishma*, *Drona* and *Karna* but comparable to *Arjuna*, *Bhima*, *Shikhandi* and *Drishtadhyumna* who are no less formidable. Therefore once he is killed, victory for *Yudhishthira* is but a formality. No doubt he should be respected as their uncle but as a warrior on battle field he should be killed, displaying austerity and courage आर्तायनिमहं जाने यथतत्त्वेन भारत || वीर्यवांश्च महातेजा महात्मा च विशेषतः | कृति च चित्रयोधी च संयुक्तो लाघवेन च || यद्दृग्भीष्मस्तथा द्रोणो यादृक्कर्णश्च संयुगे | तादृशस्तद्विशिष्टो वा मद्रराजो मतो मम || युद्ध्यमानस्य तस्याहं चिन्तयानश्च भारत | योद्धारं नाधिगच्छामि तुल्यरूपं जनाधिप ||..तस्माज्जहि रणे शल्यं मघवानिव शम्बरम्||..तवैव हि जयो नूनं हते मद्रेश्वरे युधि || तस्मिन्हते हतं सर्वं धार्तराष्ट्रबलं महत्|..न चैवात्र दया कार्या मातुलोऽयं ममेति वै | क्षत्रधर्मं पुरस्कृत्य जहि मद्रजनेश्वरम्|| Comforted by these words, *Yudhishthira* departed to his camp an slept like a royal tusker without any fear 'केशवे तु तदा याते धर्मपुत्रो युधिष्ठिरः | विसृज्य सर्वान् . . सुष्वाप रजनीं तां तु विशल्य इाव कुञ्जरः ||'.

Chapter XIII

Karna's death transforms the entire face and character of the war. *Kripa*, *Kritaverma*, *hvatthama* and *Shakuni* together are enjoined to remain with *Shalya* and never engage *Pandavas* parately 'न न एकेन योद्धव्यं कथञ्चिदपि पाण्डवैः || यो ह्येकः पाण्डवैर्युध्येद्यो वा युध्यन्तमुत्सृजेत्| म पञ्चभिर्भवेद्युक्तः पातकैश्चोपपातकैः || अन्योन्यं रक्षद्भियोद्धव्यं सहितैश्च ह | एवं ते समयं कृत्वा सर्वे तत्र महारथाः || मद्रराजं पुरस्कृत्य तूर्णमभ्यद्रवन्परान्||'. In the battle that ensues, *Karna's* ree sons are killed by *Nakula*.

Shalya who intervenes in that battle is made to withdraw by *Bhima*, who jumps down from his ariot fights with his massive mace even as *Kubera* fought in earlier times. Seeing his charioteer being lled by him, *Shalya* looking ferocious like *Agni*, *Yama*, *Indra* and as *Rudra* or like an elephant let loose a jungle jumps down from his chariot and rushes toward *Bhima* with his own mace 'पतितं प्रेक्ष्य यन्तारं शल्यः यसीं गदाम्| आदाय तरसा गजंस्तस्थौ गिरिरिवाचलः || तं दीप्तमिव कालाग्निं पाशहस्तमिवान्तकम्| सशृङ्गमिव कैलासं सवज्रमिव वासवम्|| सशूलमिव हर्यक्षं वने मिव द्विपम्| जवेनाभ्यपतद्भीमः प्रगृह्य महतीं गदाम्||'. *Bhima* and *Shalya* fighting with equal energy were lauded by eople with awe and wonder exclaiming that except *Balarama,* no one else in the world could withstand ich battle for their respective masters 'न हि मद्राधिपादन्यो रामाद्वा यदुनन्दनात्| सोढुमुत्सहते वेगं भीमसेनस्य संयुगे || तथा मद्राधिपस्यापि तावेगं महात्मनः | सोढुमुत्सहते नान्यो योधो युधि वृकोदरात्||'.

Soon *Shalya's* attention shifts to *Yudhishthira* and attacks him which is returned with furious hower of arrows, which cuts his flag mast. Seeing his companions join him, gods and seers gather in the ky expressing their surprise. When finally *Shalya* repels their combined attack *Duryodhana* is leasantly surprised seeing the wonderful display. In the end both fall down tired and injured making oth armies shout in desperation. Then *Kripa* removes *Shalya* to a safe place even as *Bhima* blinking his yes dazed by the force of the attack, gets up and beckons *Shalya* to come back on the battle field - क्रियाविशेषकृतिनौ रणभूमितलेऽचलौ | तौ परस्परसंरम्भाद्गदाभ्यां सुभृशाहतौ || युगपत्पेततुर्वीरावुभाविन्द्रध्वजाविव | उभयोः सेनयोर्वीरास्तदा हाकृतोऽभवान्||..ततः स्वरथमारोप्य मद्राणामृषभं रणे || अपोवाह कृपः शल्यं तूर्णमायोधनादय | क्षीणवदनिव्हलत्वात्तु निमेषात् पुनरुत्थितः || भमिसेनो दापाणिः समाह्वयत मद्रपम्||'.

Under the leadership of *Shalya, Kripa*, *Kritaverma*, *Ashvatthama*, *and Shakuni* return to ssault *Pandavas*, hurling various weapons and shouting, *kill them, kill them*, even as *Shalya* makes *Yudhishthira* feel uneasy and injures him. Seeing which *Pandavas* shower arrows disabling *Shalya* entirely. *Duryodhana* seeing *Shalya's* valour feels assured that *Pandavas* and their companions will soon be exterminated by him. Even as the stiff confrontation continues, *Yudhishthira* sees *Shalya* coming towards him as if *Saturn* has come near *Moon* and wonders whether he will fulfill his promise to *Krishna* killing *Shalya* or he himself will be killed by him. 'कथं नु समरे शक्यं तन्माधववचो महत्| न हि क्रुद्धो रणे राजा क्षपयेत बलं मम || अहं मद्भ्रातरश्चैव सात्यकिश्च महारथः | पञ्चालाः सृञ्जयाश्चैव न शक्ताः स्म हि मद्रपम्|| निहमिष्यति चैवाद्य मातुलोऽस्मान्महाबलः | गोविन्दवचनं सत्यं कथं भवति किं त्विदम्||'.

Finally, *Yudhishthira* declares that his brothers having eliminated *Bhishma*, *Drona*, *Karna* and many other warriors for his sake, it is now his duty that he should kill *Shalya* to complete the task. Then in spite of being soft and compassionate by nature, like a true blue-blooded *Kshatriya* he leads with *Nakula* and *Sahadeva* by his side, the charge on *Shalya,* who was none other than their mother *Madri's* brother 'समाहुयाब्रवीत्सर्वान्भ्रातृन्कृष्णं च माधवम | भीष्मो द्रोणश्च कर्णश्च ये चान्ये पृथिवीक्षितः || कौरवार्थेपराक्रान्ताः संग्रामे निधनंगताः | यथाभागं यथोत्साहं भवन्तः कृतपौरुषाः || भागोऽवशिष्त एकोऽयं मम शलयो महारथः | सोऽहमय युधा जेतुमाशंसे मद्रकाधिपमम्||...साध्विमौ मातुलं युद्धे क्षत्रधर्मपुरस्कृतौ || मदर्थे प्रतियुद्ध्योतां मानार्हौ सत्यसङ्गरौ | मां वा शल्यो रणे हन्ता तं वाहं भद्रमस्तु वः ||'. *Sanjaya* reports conclusively that this battle was nothing else but consequence of ignoble thoughts, 'तदाऽऽसीत्तुमुलं युद्धं पुनरेव जयैषिणाम्| तावकाणां परेषां च राजन्दुर्मन्त्रिते तव ||'.

Yudhishthira pursues *Shalya* angrily showering arrows and signaling him to stop like *Rudra* pursuing wild animals, 'साश्वागंहांश्च तुरगानपत्तींश्चैव सहस्रधा | व्यपोथयन संग्रामे क्रुद्धो रुद्रः पशूनिव || शून्यमायोधनं कृत्वा शरवर्षैः समन्ततः अभ्यद्रवत मद्रेशं तिष्ठ शल्येति चाब्रवीत्||'. The fight between becomes furious people saying either one of them surely defeat the other today -'हत्वा मद्राधिपं पार्थो भसंक्ष्यतेऽद्य वसुन्धराम्|| शल्यो वा पाण्डवं हत्वा दद्याद्दुर्योधनाय गाम्| इतीव निश्चयो नाभूद्योधाना नः भारत ||'. At one stage *Yudhishthira's* horses and the charioteer are killed by *Shalya*. Seeing thus incapacitated, *Yuidhishthira* becomes angry and remembering the words spoke to him by *Krishna* *Yudhishthira* summons all his valor and fights *Shalya* in decisive manner - 'गोविन्दवाक्यं त्वरितं विचिन्त्य दधे मतिं शल्यविनाशाय | स धर्मराजो निहताश्वसूतो रथे तिष्ठञ्शक्तिमेवाभ्यकाङ्क्षत्||', like an angry *Rudra* luminous in splendour at the time of destroying the worlds, he kills *Shalya* discharging, even as *Kauravas* observe, with a powerful arrow blazing with sparks of fire or like a meteor falling from the sky at the end of the world, 'दीप्तामग्नेरिनां प्रहिता बलेन सविस्फुलिङ्गां सहसा पतन्तीम्| प्रेक्षन्त सर्वे कुरवः समेता दिवो युगान्ते महतीमिवोल्काम्||'. Then shooting the arrow like *Rudra* did when he killed *Andkasura*, *Yudhishsthira* declared *Shalya* you are dead now, 'हतोऽसि पापेत्यभिगर्जमानो रुद्रोऽन्धकायान्तकरः यथेषुम्| प्रसार्य बाहुं सुदृढं सुपाणिं क्रोधेन नृत्यन्निव धर्मराजः ||'.

Shalya falls down like a mountain peak sinking down with his arms spread, even as earth embraced him silently as a beloved would embrace her lover. Having enjoyed the lands for a long period of time like a lord, it appeared that *Shalya* took refuge in the loving arms of the earth. *Yudhishthira* became silent as when one completes a sacrifice, offering *Shalya* as oblation in the sacrificial fire. The goddess of wealth did not seem to separate her self even after the arrow breached his heart and he fell down dead - 'सा तस्य मर्माणि विदार्य शुभ्रमुग्रं विशालं च तथैव भित्वा | विवेश गां तोयमिवाप्रसक्ता यशो विशाल नृपतेर्दहन्ति ||..बाहू प्रसार्याभिमुखो धर्मराजस्य मद्रराट्| ततो निपतितो भूमाविन्द्रध्वज इवोच्छ्रितः || स तथा भिन्नसर्वाङ्गो रुधिरेण समुक्षितः | प्रत्युद्गत इव प्रेम्णा भूम्या स नरपुङ्गवः || प्रियया कान्तया कान्तः पतमान इवोरसि | चिरं भुक्त्वा वसुमतीं प्रियां कान्तामिव प्रभुः || सर्वैरङ्गैः समाश्लिष्य प्रसुप्त इव चाभवत | धर्म्ये धर्मात्मना युद्धे निहतो धर्मसूनुना || सम्यग्घुत इव स्विष्टः प्रशान्तोऽग्निरिवाध्वरे | शक्त्या विभिन्नहृदयं विप्रविद्धायुधध्वजम्| संशान्तमपि मद्रेशं लक्ष्मीर्नैव विमुञ्चति |'.

Seeing *Shalya* dead, *Duryodhana's* soldiers loose their *will* to fight and desert the battle field. *Sanjaya* concludes that thus did the war end with death of his sons. Soon one by one all retire to their camps, *Pandavas* and associates congratulating *Yudhishthira*, sounding their conches even as Gods praised *Indra* after *Vrittra* was killed. The people lauded him saying that righteousness has won the battle and the evil *is* vanquished. They shouted at the top of their voice, letting *Dhritarashtra* know that *Arjuna* is an incomparable warrior and *Krishna* is great in eminence. Let him recollect and remember the good advice given to him by *Vidura* and the misery which *Pandavas* had suffered. Let all the gods take note of *Shalya's* death and *Yudhishthira's* victory. Why should any one wonder and be surprised about their success when they had protector in *Krishna* the lord of the worlds. Thereafter Yudhsihshthira also shoots arrows on Kritavarma incapacitating him from his charitand horse.

Seeing *Shalya* dead and *Kritavarma* also incapacitated, *Kauaravas* soldiers become exceedingluy despondent and diffident. Reporting the events to *Dhritarashtra*, *Sanjaya* remarks that with the death of *Shalya* his sons have become completely lost their confidence, like the trader who finds his ship wrecked in the great ocean storm 'पातिते युधि दुर्धर्षे मद्रराजे महारथे | तावकास्तव पुत्राश्च प्रायशो विमुखाभवन्|| वणिजो नावि भिन्नायां यथागाधप्लवेऽर्णवे || वृषा यथा भग्नशृङ्गाः शीर्णदन्ता यथा गजाः | मध्याह्ने प्रत्यपायाम निर्जिताजातशत्रुणा ||'.

Seeing *Shalya* soldiers seeing him fall on the battle field started deserting the battle field. And seeing the *Kauravas* also began to leave, *Pandavas* and *Panchalas* converse among themselves that *Yudhishthira* has now no enemies left, *Duryodhana* having been thrown out of his position and possessions. Let *Dhritarashtra* recollect the advice which *Vidura* had given him and weep for his sons, knowing that *Arjuna* is invincible and supreme among all archers. Let them be now *Pandava's* slaves and experience the sufferings which those noble ones had suffered earlier under them. Let *Dhritarashtra* know the greatness of *Krishna*, the terrible power behind *Arjuna's Gandeeva*. Let them acknowledge *Yudhishthira's* valour having killed *Shalya*, which was difficult even for gods. For whom the lord of the world *Janardana Krishna* is a protector and righteous refuge, success would surely be

eirs. Indeed gain is verily, his, success is verily his, whose protector is *Hrishikesha*, the lord of the ree worlds 'अद्य राजा सत्यधृतिर्हतामित्रो युधिष्ठिरः | अद्य दुर्योधनो हीनो दीप्तया नृपतिश्रियः || अद्य श्रुत्वा हतं पुत्रं धार्तराष्ट्रो जनेश्वरः | विक्लवः नतो भूमौ किल्बिष प्रतिपद्यताम्|| अद्य जानातु कौंतेय समर्थं सर्वधन्विनाम्| अद्यात्मानं च दुर्मेधा गर्हयिष्यति पापकृत्|| अद्य क्षत्तुर्वचः सत्यं स्मरतां ब्रुवतो हितम्| प्रभृति पार्थ च प्रेष्यभूत इवाचरन्|| विजानन्तु नृपा दुःखं यत्प्राप्तं पाण्डुनन्दनैः | अद्य कृष्णस्य माहात्म्यं विजानतु महीपतिः || अद्यार्जुनधनुर्घोषं घोरं जानातु संयुगे | स्त्राणां च बलं सर्वं बाह्वोश्च बलमाहवे || ..अद्य श्रेष्ठस्य जानीतां पाण्डवस्य पराक्रमम्| मद्रराजं हतं श्रुत्वा देवैरपि सुदुःसहम्|| येषां च जगतीनाथो नाथः कृष्णो नार्दनः | कथं तेषां जयो न स्याद्येषां धर्मो व्यपाश्रयः || लाभस्तेषां जयस्तेषां कुतस्तेषां पराभवः | येषां नाथो हृषीकेशः सर्वलोकविभुर्हरिः ||'.

Extremely elated by the success, *Srinjayas* then pursue the *Kauarvas* soldiers, *Arjuna* ollowing them soon with full aggressive intent. Then seeing *Arjuna* aggressively positioned, *uryodhana* asks his charioteer to take his chariot to the rear side of his army even as his frightened *auaravs* soldiers disperse on all side seeing *Bhima's* onslaught on them. Observing the turn of the tide, *uryodhana* tells his charioteer he will face the challenge with full confidence his army which had fled vill return him to fight with him. The he urges his soldiers to fight back courageously saying that there is o place in the world, where they can hide and be safe from *Pandavas*. Know for certain their soldiers re few and both *Krishna* and *Arjuna* too are tired, therefore, if they fight they will surely win. *Pandavas* re sure to continue their struggle hence it is better to die on the battle ground. *Death* even for a rightened soldier is sure and certain, therefore, which one being a *Kshatriya* would refuse to fight? To onfront a furious *Bhima* would be more beneficial than running away from him. Death fighting as a *Kshatriya* would always be desirable. Killing an enemy on the battle filed brings happiness in the world nd if killed, will surely attain heavenly world. Listening to his inspiring words many of his remaining oldiers joined him to fight for him 'मामतिक्रमते पार्थो धनुष्पाणिमवास्थितम्| जघनं सर्वसैन्यानां ममाश्वान्प्रतिपादय || जघने युध्यमानं हि कौन्तेयो मां समन्ततः | नोत्सहेदभ्यतिक्रान्तुं वेलामिव महोदधिः |...सर्यियिते च समरे निरुद्धेषु च पांडुषु | पुनरावर्तते तूर्णं मामकं बलमोजसा ||...न तं देशं प्रपश्यामि पृथिव्या पर्वतेषु च || यत्र यातान्न वा हन्युः पाण्डवाः किं सृतेन वः | अल्पं च बलमेतेषां कृष्णौ च भृशविक्षतौ || यदि सर्वेऽत्र तिष्ठामो ध्रुवं नो विजयो भवेत्| शृण्वन्तु क्षत्रियाः सर्वे यावन्तोऽत्र समागताः || यदा शूरं च भीरुं च मारयन्तकः सदा | को नु मूढो न युध्येत पुरुषः क्षत्रियो ध्रुवम्||'.

Shalva, the king of *mlecchas,* who had a great respect for *Duryodhana,* then joined him. He was an angry and arrogant man given to self-praise, powerful like a mountain and destroyer like *Indra's* ऐरावत tusker came before *Pandavas*. But he was not match to Drishtadhyumna who kills his elephant breaking its head, which made his soldiers scatter creating a great havoc. *Satyaki* too gave a death blow to *Shalva* severing his head with his spear 'संनिवृत्ते जनौघे तु शाल्वो म्लेच्छगणधिपः | अभ्यवर्तत संक्रुद्धः पाण्डवानां महद्बलम्|| आस्थाय सुमहानागं प्रभिन्न पर्वतोपमम्| दृप्तमैरावतप्रख्यममित्रगणमर्दनम्||..ततस्तु नागं धरणीधराभं मदं स्रवन्तं जलदप्रकाशम्| गदां समाविद्ध्य भृशं जघान पाञ्चालराजस्य सुतस्तरस्वी ||..निपात्यमाने तु तदा गजेन्द्रे हाहाकृते तव पुत्रस्य सैन्ये | स शाल्व राजस्य शिनिप्रवीरो जहार भल्लेन शिरः शितेन ||'.

Seeing the battle coming to an end, *Arjuna* says to *Krishna* that *Duryodhana* had once a great army but to day it lies completely destroyed. Indeed it is difficult to know what is in one's destiny. It would have been better if *Duryodhana* had negotiated after *Bhishma's* death. But even after *Drona*, *Karna*, his brothers and companions died his hunger for warfare did not quench that fool's stomach. Born in a royal family, like *Kuru* race, no one would have thought of a fruitless hostility unless it is *Duryodhana*! Who can cure one who refuses to heed even after advised by *Bhishma*, *Drona* and *Vidura*? His attitude and actions point that he was surely born to destroy one's own family. Even now he is sure that *Duryodhana* will not agree to part with their share of the kingdom as long as he is alive, having told *Vidura* so earlier. When he was born seers had spoken when he will surely cause extermination of the whole *Kshatriya* class, which seems to come true, seeing warrior class is rapidly dwindling having helped in this war. This great war will end only with his death - 'अनन्तकल्पा ध्वजिनी भूत्वा ह्येषां महात्मनाम्| क्षयमद्य गता युद्धे पश्य दैवं यथाविधम्||..हते भीष्मे तु संदध्याच्छिवं स्यादिह माधव | न च तत्कृतवान्मूढो धार्तराष्ट्रः सुबालिषः || उक्तं भीष्मेण यद् वाक्यं हितं तथ्यं च माधव | तच्चापि नासौ कृतवान्वीतबुद्धिः सुयोधनः ||..मूढांस्तु सर्वथा मन्ये धार्तराष्ट्रान्सुबालिशान्| पतिते शान्तनोः पुत्रे येऽकार्षुः संयुगं पुनः ||...अल्पावशिष्टे सैन्येऽस्मिन्सूतपुत्रे च पातिते | सपुत्रे वै नरव्याघ्रे नैवाशाम्यत वैशसम्||..को नु राजकुले जातः कौरवेयो विशेषतः | निरर्थकं महद्वैरं कुर्यादन्यः सुयोधनात्||..येन शान्तनवो वीरो द्रोणो विदुर एव च | प्रत्याख्याताः शमस्यार्थे किं नु तस्याद्य भेषजम्||..नैष दास्यति नो राज्यमिति मे मतिरच्युत || उक्तोऽहं बहुशस्तात विदुरेण महात्मना | न जीवन्दास्यते भागं धार्तराष्ट्रस्तु मानद || यावत्प्राणा धरिष्यन्ति धार्तराष्ट्रस्य दुर्मतेः | तावद्युष्मास्वपापेषु प्रचरिष्यति पापकम्||..तत्सर्वमद्य जानामि व्यवसायं दुरात्मनः | यदुक्तं

वचनं तेन विदुरेण महात्मना || उक्तं हि वहुशः सिद्रैर्जातमात्रे सुयोधने | एनं प्राप्य दुरात्मनं क्षयं क्षत्रं गमिष्यति ||'.

Not seeing *Duryodhana Ashvatthama*, *Kripa* and *Kritaverma* are perplexed where he could have gone till they were informed of his destination. On making various inquiries, they come to know that he has gone where *Shakuni* was fighting with *Pandava's* soldiers. Even as they were proceeding towards *Duryodhana*, *Drishtadhyumna* follows them 'अदृष्ट्वा नु रथानीकं दुर्योधनमरिंदमम्|| अश्वत्थामा कृपश्चैव कृतवर्मा च सात्वतः | अपृच्छन्क्षत्रियांस्तत्र क्व नु दर्योधनो गतः ||..आहुः केचिद्धतं दूते पयातो यत्र सौवलः || हित्वा पाञ्चालराजस्य तदनीकं दुरुत्सहम्|..श्रुत्वा तु वचनं तेषामश्वत्थामा महावलः | भित्वा पाञ्चालराजस्य तदनीकं दुरुत्सहम्|| कृपश्च कृतवर्मा च पययौ यत्र सौवलः | रथनीकं परित्यज्य शूराः सुदृढधान्विनः ||'. Seeing *Satyaki* approach him, *Sanjaya* fight valiantly nearaby but becoming tired is taken a prisoner by *Satyaki* *Kripa*, *Kritavama* and *Ashvatthama* not seeing *Duryodhana* any where near them, left to go to the place where *Shakuni* was still fighting his battles.

At one stage when *Krishna* tells *Arjuna* that large number of *Kauravas'* warriors dead *Pandavas* are safe. He points out to *Satyaki* who was bringing *Sanjaya* taking him a prisoner, even as *Nakula* and *Sahadvea* seem to have become tired. *Kripa*, *Kritavama* and *Ashvatthama* seems to have left the battle filed to go some where else, leaving *Drishtadhyumna* looking successful after making *Duryhodhana's* soldiers flee in all directions. Thereafter, *Krishna* points out *Duryodhana* standing with his brother *Sudarshana* in the middle of his cavalry, with major portion of his army is destroyed or dead If Arjuna kills him now he will find himself justified -'शत्रवो हतभूयिष्ठा ज्ञातयः परिपालिताः | गृहित्वा संजयं चासौ निवृत्तः शिनिपुङ्गवः || परिश्रान्तश्च नकुलः सहदेवश्च भारत | योधयित्वा रणे पापान्धार्तराष्ट्रान् सहानुगान्|| दुर्योधनमभित्यज्य त्रय एते व्यवस्थिताः | कृपश्च कृतवर्मा च द्रौणिश्चैव महारथः || असौ तिष्ठति पाञ्चाल्यः श्रिया परमया युतः | दुर्योधनवलं हत्वा सह सर्वैः पभद्रकैः || असौ दुर्योधनः पार्थ वाजिमध्ये व्यवस्थितः | छत्रेण ध्रियमाणेन प्रेक्षमाणो मुहुर्मुहुः || प्रतिव्यूह्य वलं सर्वं रणमध्ये व्यवस्थितः | एनं हत्वा शितैर्वाणैः कृतकृत्यो भविष्यसि ||'.

Arjuna points out to *Krishna* that *Bhima* having already killed *Dhritarashtra's* remaining sons and *Bhishma*, *Drona* and *Karna* no more alive, only *Ashavatthama*, *Kripa*, *Kritavarma*, *Shakuni*, his son *Uluka* and *Susharma* of *Trigarta* alone area still fighting. No one of them will ever escape from him even as *Duryodhana* would search and surely die robbed of his possession. - धृतराष्ट्रसुताः सर्वे हता भीमेन माधव | यावेतावास्थितौ कृष्ण तावद्य न भविष्यतः || हतो भीष्मो हतो द्रोणः कर्णो वैकर्तनो हतः || मद्रराजो हतः शल्यो हतः कृष्ण जयद्रथः |... अश्वत्थामा कृपश्चैव त्रिगर्ताधिपतिस्तथा |... मोक्षो न नूनं कालात्तु विद्यते भुवि कस्यचित्||... तान्वै सर्वान्हनिष्यामि यद्यपि स्युर्न मानुषाः ||..समाप्तमद्य वै कर्म सर्वं कृष्ण भविष्यति || अद्य दुर्योधनो दीप्तां श्रियं प्राणांश्च मोक्ष्यति | नापयाति भयात्कृष्ण संग्रामाद्यदि चेन्मम || निहतं विद्धि वार्ष्णेय धार्तराष्ट्रं सुदुर्मतिम्|'. Then *Arjuna* kills and *Sahadeva* kills *Shakuni*, reminding him that he is the root of all misdeeds performed by *Kauravas*, those who ridiculed them earlier lying now dead. *Sahadeva* cuts his head off with a spear and also kill his son *Uluka* 'क्षत्रधर्मे स्थिरो भूत्वा युध्यस्व पुरुषो भव || यत्तदा हृष्यसे मूढ रलहन्नक्षैः सभातले | फलमद्य पपश्यस्य दुर्मते ||..तं चापि सर्वे प्रतिपूजयन्तो दृष्ट्वा ब्रुवाणाः सहदेवमाजौ | दिष्ट्या हतो नैकृतिको महात्मा महात्मजो वीर रणे त्वयेति ||'. *Sanjaya* repors these events to *Dhritarashtra* tells him no one remained alive thereafter.

Seeing *Pandavas* reveling in their success and *Kaurava* soldiers dispirited, an extremely indignant *Duryodhana* leaves the battle field, having neither any army nor any vehicle. He who had eleven battalions earlier now walked with the powerful mace on his shoulders alone on foot towards the lake, recalling *Vidura's* words that he will cause destruction of the family 'ततस्तु पाण्डवानीकान्निःसृत्य वहवो जनाः | अभ्यघ्नंस्तावकान्युद्धे मुहुर्तादिव भारत | ततोः निःशेषमभवत्तत्सैन्य तव भारत || अक्षौहिण्यः समेतास्तु तव पुत्रस्य भारत | एकादश हता युद्धे ताः पभो पाण्डुसृञ्जयैः || तेषु राजसहस्रेषु तावकेषु महात्मसु | एको दुर्योधनो राजन्नदृश्यत भृशं क्षतः || ततो वीक्ष्य दिशः सर्वा दृष्ट्वा शून्यां च मेदिनीम्| विहीनः सर्वयोधैश्च पाण्डवान्वीक्ष्य संयुगे || मुदितान्सर्वतः सिद्धान्नर्दमानान्समन्ततः | वाणशब्दरवांश्चैव श्रुत्वा तेषा महात्मनाम्|| दुर्योधनो महाराज कश्मलेनाभिसंवृतः | अपयाने मनश्चक्रे विहीनवलवाहनः ||..एकादशचमूभर्ता पुत्रो दुर्योधनस्तव | गदामादाय तेजस्वी पदातिः पस्थितो ह्रदम्|| इदं नूनं महापाज्ञो विदुरो दृष्टावान्पुरा | महद्वैशस्मस्माकं क्षत्रियाणां च संयुगे ||'.

When *Drishtadhyumna* sees *Sanjaya* being brought a prisoner by *Satyaki*, he inquires why was he left alive. When *Satyaki* was ready to kill him *Vyasa* intervenes and prevails them to let him go free 'धृष्टद्युम्नस्तु मां दृष्ट्वा हसन्सात्यकिमव्रवीत्| किमनेन गृहीतेन नानार्थोऽस्ति जीवय || धृष्टद्युम्नवचः श्रुत्वा शिनेर्नप्तः महारथः | उद्यम्य निशितं खड्गं हन्तुं मानुद्यतस्तदा || तवागम्य महापाज्ञः कृष्णद्वैपायनोऽव्रवीत्| मुच्यतां जीवन्न हन्तव्यः कथंचन ||'. Released from captivity, *Sanjaya* decides to proceed to *Hastinapura*. Narrating the events that transpired thereafter, on his way, he sass

uryodhana, standing alone with tears in his eyes lost in thoughts, body full of scratches and blood ɔzing from wounds. He did not see *Sanjaya* coming towards him, who coming by his side, narrates the ents leading to his own captivity and release at the instance of sage *Vyasa*. Reflecting for a moment on ose words, *Duryodhana* asks him about the army, when he repeats what *Vyasa* had told him that his others are dead and entire army destroyed leaving only *Ashvatthama, Kripa* and *Kritaverma* three of s companions 'अनुज्ञातस्त्वहं तेनन्यस्तवर्मा निरायुधः | प्रातिष्ठं येन नगरं सायाह्ने रुधिरोक्षितः || क्रोशमात्रमपक्रान्तं गदापाणिमवस्थितम्| एकं दुर्योधनं ान्नपश्यं भृशविक्षतम्|| स तु मामश्रुपूर्णाक्षो नाशक्नोदभिवीक्षितुम्| उपप्रेक्षत मां दृष्ट्वा तथा दीनमवस्थितम्|| तं चाहमपि शोचन्तं दृष्ट्वैकाकिनमाहवे | मुहूर्तं नाशकं ुर्ार्तदुःखपरिप्लुतः ||. . . ततोऽस्मै तदहं सर्वमुक्तवान्ग्रहणं तदा | द्वैपायनप्रसाच्च जीवतो मोक्षमाहवे || तस्मै तदहमाचक्षे सर्वं प्रत्यक्षदर्शिवान्| भ्रातृंश्च निहतान्सर्वान् यं च विनिपातितम्|| त्रयः किल रथाः शिष्टास्तावकानां नराधिप | इति प्रस्थानकाले मां कृष्णद्वैपायनोऽब्रवीत्||'.

Listening to this unpalatable news, *Duryodhana* breathes long. Taking *Sanjaya's* hand in his wn he said that he has no one except him at the moment as his well-wisher. Therefore, he sould inform *hritarashtra* that his son *Duryodhana* robbed of his brothers, has entered *Dvaipayana* lake to remain oncealed for some time, since he is extremely injured. When his kingdom is robbed and brothers are illed by *Pandavas* who would like to live longer 'स दीर्घमिव निःश्वस्य प्रत्यवेक्ष्य पुनः पुनः | असौ मां पाणिना स्पृष्ट्वा पुत्रास्ते यभाषत || त्वदन्यो नेह संग्रामे कश्चिज्जीवति संजय | द्वितीयं नेह पश्यामि ससहायाश्च पाण्डवाः || ब्रूया संजय राजानं प्रज्ञाचक्षुषमीश्वरम्| दुर्योधनस्तव सुतः प्रविष्टो दमित्युतः || सुहृद्भिस्तादृशैर्हीनः पुत्रैर्भ्रातृभिरेव च | पाण्डवैश्च हृते राज्ये को नु जीवेत मादृशः || आचक्षीथाः सर्वमिदं मां च मुक्तं महाहवात्| अस्मिंस्तोयाह्रदे गुप्तं वन्तं भृशविक्षतम्||'. Having spoken thus, *Duryodhana* proceeds and enters the lake concealing himself rough his power of illusion 'एवमुक्त्वा महाराज प्राविशान्तं महाह्लदम्| अस्तम्भयत तोयं च मायया मनुजाधिपः ||'.

Soon thereafter, *Sanjaya* sees *Ashvatthama*, *Kripa* and *Kritaverma* approaching towards him, vho were pleasantly surprised that he is alive. They come to know from him about *Duryodhana* and his nessage for *Dhritarashtra*. *Asahvatthama* regrets that it is unfortunate that *Duryodhana* should take uch extreme step without knowing that three of them are still alive to fight for him, 'अहोधिकस न जानाति ीवतोऽस्मान्नराधिपः || पर्याप्ता हि वयं तेन सह योधयितुं परान्||'. They reach the lake immediately and finding *Duryodhana* lespondent, *Ashavatthama* encourages him to rise and fight and live to rule the worlds and declaring hat if he dies he would surely attain heavenly world. He assures him that much of *Pandavas* army is lestroyed and they too have become tired. Therefore, along with them he should not find it difficult to ight bravely 'राजन्नुत्तिष्ठ युद्ध्यस्व सहास्माभिर्युधिष्ठिरम्|| जित्वा वा पृथिवीं भुङ्क्ष्व हतो वा स्वर्गमाप्नुहि | तेषामपि बलं सर्वं हतं दुर्योधन त्वया || तिविद्धश्च भूयिष्ठं ये शिष्टास्तत्रसैनिकाः | न ते वेगं विषहितुं शक्तास्तव विशाम्पते ||'.

Duryodhana, however, is not inclined to continue the struggle though he was pleased to see hem alive. At the moment he is not inclined to fight though he is not surprised that they are entrusted to fight for his sake out of their love, but this is not the time to prove it. He tells them perhaps if they rest for some time they may find it possible to succeed. After taking rest he promises to join them to fight the *Pandavas* 'दिष्ट्या पश्यामि वो मुक्तानिदृशात्पुरुषक्षयात्|| पाण्डुकौरवसम्मर्दाज्जीवमानान्नरर्षभान्| विजेयाष्यमो वयं सर्वे विश्रान्ता विगतक्लमाः || भवन्तश्च परिश्रान्ता वयं च भृशविक्षताः | उदीर्णं च बलं तेषां तेन युद्धं न रोचये || न त्वेतदद्भुतं वीरा यद्वो महदिदं मनः | अस्मासु च परा भक्तिर्न तु कालः पराक्रमे || विश्रम्यैकां निशामद्य भवद्भिः सहितो रणे | प्रतियोत्स्यहं शत्रूञ्श्वो न मेऽस्त्यत्र संशयः ||'. Seeing a trace of resignation in *Duryodhana's* voice *Ashvatthama* assures to fight together, vowing to offer all his merits gained through austerities, charities, truth and righteousness and declaring further that so long as he does not kill *Panchalas* he will neither wear his armour nor hold any weapons in hand 'उत्तिष्ठ राजन्भद्रं तेविजेष्यामो वयं परान्|| इष्टापूर्तेन दानेन सत्येन च जपेन च | शपे राजन्यथा ह्यद्य निहनिष्यामि सोमकान्|| मा स्म यज्ञकृतां प्रीतिमाप्नुयां सज्जनोचिताम्| यदिमां रजनीं व्युष्टां न हि हन्मि परान्रणे || नाहत्वा सर्व पाञ्चालान्विमोक्ष्ये कवचं विभो | इति सत्यं ब्रवीम्येतत्तन्मे श्रुणु जनाधिप ||'.

The conversation between *Duryodhana* and his companions was overheard by hunters who thinking that when they can receive wealth through disclosing the facts why they should spend wealth in eating dry meat 'स नो दास्यति सुप्रीतो धनानि बहुलान्युत | किं नो मांसनि शुष्केण परिक्लिष्टेन शोषिणा ||'. Thus desiring to be rewarded, conveys the same to *Bhima*. *Yudhishthira* becomes pleased and with his companions lead by *Krishna* proceeds to the lake. Hearing the tumultuous noise as they approach, the three valiant companions tell *Duryodhana* that *Pandavas* seem to be approaching, therefore, they would depart concealing them for

some time. When *Pandavas* reach the lake, they find *Duryodhana* concealed in ther waters peacefully using his power of illusion, which *Yudhishthira* points out to *Krishna*, 'पश्येमां धार्तराष्ट्रेण मायामप्सु प्रयोजिताम्|| विष्टभ्य सलिलं शेते नास्य मानुषतो भयम्| दैवीं मायामिमां कृत्वा सलिलान्तर्गतो ह्ययम्||'. *Krishna* replies that his power of illusion should be met by using counter power of illusion to kill him, even as *Vishnu* destroyed his enemy by countering their illusory powers.- 'मायाविन इमां मायां मायया जहि भारत || मायावी मायया वध्यः सत्यमेतद्युधिष्ठिर | क्रियाभ्युपायैर्बहुभिर्मायामप्सु प्रयोज्य च जहि त्वं भरतश्रेष्ठ मायात्मानं सुयोधनम्|'.

Then follows an interesting dialogue between *Yudhishthira*, as compassionate and righteous in triumph and *Duryodhana* proud and defiant in defeat. One gets glimpse of pure *Kshatra* values and of the principles of warfare rising above success and defeat. Though as disciplined person, *Yudhishthira* accepts *Krishna* leadership, his sense of righteousness, धर्म rebels against putting in practice what is demanded as *real politic* to be performed in any given circumstance. *Krishna*, though had come to destroy unrighteousness and re-establish the principles, appears more conscious of the times when he was living and as a practical politician, diplomat, master statesman and practitioner of *real politic* to use all the powers available with him to confront unrighteousness. His response is unusual, which to a normal human being may appear unethical and immoral, though his actions become justifiable and justified as response of *the Prime Existence* when seen in the context of a decadent immoral society performing his actions for maintenance of the *Cosmic Order*.

Therefore, when *Krishna* tells *Yudhsishthira* to meet *Duryodhana's* power of illusion counter power of illusion, *Yudhishthira* as a person inclined to austere penance and valued ancient धर्म, speaks to *Duryodhana* with pity and compassion. He speaks not as a triumphant conqueror but by one conscious of the क्षत्र code and proud of the renown of the *Kuru* family. Arrogance is sign of acceptance of one's inferiority and pride is confidence and acknowledgement of one's superior values. Therefore he speaks to *Duryodhana* chiding him for concealing himself in waters instead of fighting according to क्षत्र code of conduct.

He is unhappy *Duryodhana* for having been the cause for destruction of not only his own family but also of the *Kshatriya* class. A person dejected and disappointed, lacking both rational thinking and righteous counseling, needs to be spoken in words and language which he is familiar. Therefore, *Yudhishthira* provokes him, asking where his arrogance has disappeared where his pride is lost that he is hiding himself in waters fearing to be killed. He was always claiming himself to be brave but his boast and bluster have come of to use. Rise and fight like a *Kshatriya*, remembering that he is born in a great family. Such conduct befits only an ignoble one and brings no respect for him as a warrior. How can he desire to rule kingdom without fighting for it even a battle. Surely he is not brave as he claims to be for brave ones do not desert battle fielded when they face the enemy. Rise up giving up fright and fight. Having been the cause for the death of his brothers and companions, do not now hide to save life. Either defeats them and rule the kingdom or being defeated and killed depart to the heaven. Where has his skill in weaponry gone, respect धर्म the righteous duty ordained by gods and fulfill the task enjoined as a king, - 'सुयोधन किमर्थोऽयमारम्भोऽप्सु कृतस्त्वया | सर्वं क्षत्रं घातयित्वा स्वकुलं च विशाम्पते || जलाशयं प्रविष्टोऽद्य वाञ्छञ्जीवितमात्मनः| उत्तिष्ठ राजन्युध्यस्व सहास्माभिः सुयोधन || स ते दर्पो नरश्रेष्ठ स च मानः क्व ते गतः | यस्त्वं संस्तभ्य सलिलं भीतो राजन्व्यवस्थितः || सर्वे त्वां शूर इत्येवं जना जल्पन्ति संसदि | व्यर्थं तद्भवतो मन्ये शौर्यं सलिलशायिनः || उत्तिष्ठ राजन्युध्यस्व क्षत्रियोऽसि कुलोद्भवः | कौरवेयो विशेषेण कुलं जन्म च संस्मर || स कथं कौरवे वंशे प्रशंसञ्जन्म चात्मनः | युद्धाद् भीतस्ततस्तोयं प्रविश्य प्रतितिष्ठसि || अयुद्धमव्यवस्थानं नैष धर्मः सनातनः | अनार्यजुष्टमस्वर्ग्यं रणे राजन्पलायनम्|| सम्बन्धिनो वयस्यांश्च मातुलान्बान्धवांस्तथा | घातयित्वा कथं तात ह्रदे तिष्ठसि साम्प्रतम्||..न हि शूराः पलायन्ते शत्रून्दृष्ट्वा कथञ्चन | ब्रूहि वा त्वं यया वृत्त्या शूर त्यजसि संगरम्|| क्व ते तत् पौरुषं यातं क्व च मानः सुयोधन | क्व च विक्रान्तता याता क्व च विस्फूर्जितं महत्|| क्व ते कृतास्त्रता याता किञ्च शेषे जलाशये | स त्वमुत्तिष्ठ युध्यस्व क्षत्रधर्मेण भारत || अस्मांस्तु वा पराजित्य प्रशाधि पृथिवीमिमाम्| अथवा निहतोऽस्माभिर्भूमौ स्वप्स्यसि भारत || एष ते परमो धर्मः सृष्टो धात्रा महात्मना | तं कुरुष्व यथातथ्यं राजा भव महाराज ||'.

Hearing these words, *Duryodhana* sheepishly admits that it is not strange that fear should enter one's mind. But like as serpent whose tail is stepped on, he arrogantly retorts that he has not taken shelter

aring them, even though he is presently standing alone neither with a chariot nor a bow, all his tendants killed and army destroyed. He needed rest and respite and therefore, had come here neither to ve life nor out of fear nor repentance. *Yudhishthira* should tarry awhile and take rest too for him to me out and fight them all 'नैतच्चित्रं महाराज यद्भीः प्राणिनामाविशेषत्| न च प्राणभयाद्भीतो व्यपयातोऽस्मि भारत || अरथश्चानिषङ्गी च नः पार्ष्णिसारथिः | एकश्चाप्यगणः संख्ये प्रत्याश्वासमरोचयम्|| न प्राणहेतोर्न भयान्न विषादाद्विशाम्पते | इदमम्भः प्रविष्टोऽस्मि श्रमात्त्विदमनुष्ठितम्|| त्वं र्वमीहि कौन्तेय ये चाप्यनुगनाम्नव | अहमुत्थाय वः सर्वान् प्रतियोत्स्यामि संयुगे ||'.

Yudhishthira was in no mood to listen to his justification nor was he keen to drag the unpleasant id agonizing confrontation for long. Therefore, he calls him to come out and fight with them, since ey have been searching for him for long. Either kill them all and rule or being killed attain the world of eroes 'अश्वस्ता एव सर्वे स्म चिरं त्वां मृगयामहे | तदिदानीं समुत्तिष्ठ युध्यस्वेह सुयोधन || हत्वा वा समरे पार्थान्स्फीतं राज्यमवाप्नुहि | निहतो वा रणेऽस्माभिर्वि गकवाप्स्यसि ||'. *Duryodhana* in spite of his evil disposition, had sneaking regard for *Yudhishthira* and was ire that he will never deviate from क्षत्रधर्म. Therefore, conceding that those for whose sake he had desired ingdom are all now dead, in any case he now does not desire live like a widow and rule since without is brothers and companions, what purpose will remain for him to remaining alive. He would rather live forest than be attracted by kingdom. With his strength lost, *Yudhishthira* then can live unconcerned nd happily for rest of his life. In fact the very day *Bhishma*, *Drona* and *Karna* lay dead, he knew that ar for all practical intent and purpose had ended. Therefore, let *Yudhishthira* himself enjoy the ingdom for the remainder of life which in any way has become weak 'यदर्थं राज्यमिच्छामि कुरूणां कुरुनन्दन | न इमे हताः सर्वे भातरो मे जनेश्वर || क्षीणरत्नां च पृथिवीं हतक्षत्रियपुङ्गवाम्| न ह्युत्सहाम्यहं भोक्तुं विधवामिव योषिताम्||..न त्विदानीमहं मन्ये कार्यं युद्धेन कर्हिचित्| णे कर्णे च संशान्ते निहते च पितामहे ||..सुहृदस्तादृशान्हित्वा पुत्रान्भातृन्पितृनपि | भवद्भिश्च हृते राज्ये को नु जीवेत मदृशः || अहं वनं गमिष्यामि ह्यजिनैः निवासितः | रतिर्हि नास्ति मे राज्ये हतपक्षस्य भारत ||..गच्छ त्वं भुङ्क्ष्व राजेन्द्र पृथिवीं निहतेश्वराम्| हतयोधां नष्टरत्नां क्षीणवृत्तिर्यथासुखम्||'.

Yudhishthira as the last bastion of righteousness perhaps expected *Duryodhana*, as proud *Kshatriya*, to fight like a warrior and not resign to his fate. Therefore he retorts that even if *Duryodhana* had the power to give him kingdom, he would neither be willing to accept it, nor having fought as a warrior with valour claim it in unrighteous manner. Conscious of his क्षत्रधर्म he would rather defeat him and only then rule the lands. Therefore he asks *Duryodhana* what obscurity has come over his mind that he is now inclined to offer kingdom, when he is neither in a position to give nor seize it from any one having denied earlier when *Krishna* had suggested. Why be charitable now when earlier he was unwilling to part even as much as would stand on tip of a needle. He surely seems to lack all sense of discrimination when time has come to loose his very life. At this moment *Duryodhana's* life is in his hand since he is incapable of protecting himself and if desires he can even spare. It is better for him to fight, because in that alone is his welfare 'आर्तप्रलापान्मा तात सलिलस्थः प्रभाषिथाः | नैतन्मनसि मे राजन्वाशितं शकुनेरिव || यदि वापि समर्थः स्यात्त्वं दानाय सुयोधन | नाहमिच्छेयमवनिं त्वया दत्तां प्रशासितुम्|| अधर्मेण न गृह्णीयां त्वया दत्तां महीमिमाम्| न हि धर्मः स्मृतो राजन्क्षत्रियस्य प्रतिग्रहः || त्वया दत्तां न चेच्छेयं पृथिवीमखिलामहम् | त्वां तु युद्धे विनिर्जित्य भोक्तास्मि वसुधामिमाम्|| अनीश्वरश्च पृथिवीं कथं त्वं दातुमिच्छसि | त्वयेयं पृथिवी राजन्किन्न दत्ता तदैव हि || धर्मतो याचमानानां प्रशमार्थं कुलस्य नः | वार्ष्णेयं प्रथमं राजन्प्रत्याख्याय महाबलम्|| किमिदानीं ददासि त्वं को हि ते चित्तविभ्रमः | अभियुक्तस्तु को राजा दातुमिच्छेद्धि मेदिनीम्|| न त्वमद्य महीं दातुमीशः कौरवनन्दन | आच्छेत्तुं वा बलाद्राजन्स कथं दातुमिच्छसि || मां तु निर्जित्य संग्रामे पालयेमां वसुन्धराम्| सूच्यग्रेणापि यद्भूमेरपि भिद्येत भारत || तन्मात्रमपि तन्मह्यं न ददाति पुरा भवान्| स कथं पृथिवीमेतां प्रददासि विशाम्पते ||..त्वं तु केवलमौर्ख्येण विमूढो नावबुद्ध्यसे || पृथिवीं दातुकामोऽपि जीवितेन विमोक्ष्यसे | अस्मान्वा त्वं पराजित्य प्रशाधि पृथिवीमिमाम्|| अथवा निहतोऽस्माभिर्व्रज लोकाननुत्तमान्| जीवितं तव दुष्प्रज्ञ मयि सम्प्रति वर्तते || जीवयेयमहं कामं न तु त्वं जीवितुं क्षमः |'.

It may appear strange in modern context that a proud and arrogant person like *Duryodhana* when he is weak should be shown consideration to enable him to regain strength and power to fight. But the times were different and people were of different mental framework where righteousness was recognized and valour was praised among warriors. Therefore, *Duryodhana's* request was not contrary to the prevailing conditions when he had no weapons to fight. But stung by the unkind words spoken by *Yushishthira*, *Duryodhna* comes out of the lake angry, breathing heavy and wringing his hands to fight his last battle. Seeing all those present, he reminds them he has come alone on foot tired and unarmed,

with neither a chariot nor weapons. Therefore, though he fears neither *Pandavas* nor *Krishna*, if the desire to fight a righteous battle, then they should come one by one. He will fight them all, redeemin death of his brothers, elders and friends since people speak of reputation as the foundation of a righteousness 'यूयं समुहृदः पार्थाः सर्वे सरथवाहनाः | अहमेकः परिद्यूनो विरथो हतवाहनः || आत्तशस्त्रै रथोपेतैर्बहुभिः परिवारितः | कथमेकः पदाति सन्नशस्त्रो योद्धुमुत्सहे || एकैकेन तु मां यूयं योधयध्वं युधिष्ठिर | न ह्येको बहुभिर्वीरैर्न्याय्यो योधयितुं युधि || विशेषतो विकवचः श्रान्तश्चापत्समाश्रितः | भृ विक्षतगात्रश्च श्रान्तवाहनसैनिकः || न मे त्वत्तो भयं राजन्न च पार्थाद्वृकोदरात्| फाल्गुनाद्वासुदेवाद्वा पाञ्चालेभ्योऽथवा पुनः |..एकाः सर्वानहं क्रुद्धो वारयि युधि स्थितः || अहमुत्थाय सर्वान वै प्रतियोत्स्यामि संयुगे |..तेजसा नाशयिष्यामि स्थिरीभवत पाण्डवाः | अद्यानृण्यं गमिष्यामि क्षत्रियाणां यशस्विनाम्||..मित्राणा सुहृ चैव बान्धवानां तथैव च | अनृण्यामद्य गच्छामि हत्वा त्वां भ्रातृभिः सह ||'.

Impressed by his response, *Yudhishthira* commends appreciatively for remembering क्षत्र धर्म Then in a grand gesture, he permits *Duryodhana* to fight any one of them singly using any weapon of hi choice, assuring all others standing as observers. Even if he kills any one of them, he will gain back hi kingdom or killed, heavens shall be his 'दिष्ट्या त्वमपि जानिषे क्षत्रधर्मं सुयोधन || दिष्ट्या ते वर्तते बुद्धिर्युद्धायैव महाभुज | दिष्ट्या शूरोऽ कौरव दिष्ट्या जानासि संगरम्|| यस्त्वमेको हि नः सर्वान्संगरे योद्धुमिच्छसि | एक एकेन संगम्य यत्ते सम्मतमायुधम्|| तत् त्वमादाय युध्यस्व प्रेक्षकास्ते वयं स्थिताः स्वयमिष्टं च ते कामं वीर भूयो ददाम्यहम्|| हत्वैकं भवतो राज्यं हतो वा स्वर्गमाप्नुहि |'. Surprised by this offer, *Duryodhana* agrees t fight the person of his choice with mace as his weapon 'एकश्चेद्योद्धुमाक्रन्दे शूरोऽद्य मम दीयताम्|| आयुधानामियं चापि वृत त्वत्सम्मते गदा | हन्तैकं भवतामेकः शक्यं मां योऽभिमन्यते || पदातिर्गदया संख्ये स युध्यतु मया सह |..गदया त्वां महाबाहो विजेष्यामि महानुजम् *Yudhishthira* then welcmes him to come out and fight 'उत्तिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ गान्धारे मां योधय सुयोधन | एक एकेन संगम्य संयुगे गदया बल || पुरुषो भव गान्धारे युध्यस्व सुसमाहितः | अद्य ते जीवितं नास्ति यदीन्द्रोऽपि तवाश्रयः ||'.

Feeling extremely slighted, *Duryodhana* entire body wounded and covered with blood, comes out the lake with his mighty mace in hand, breathing like a angry serpent, shining like mid-day *Sun* o like mighty mountain or like furious *Rudra* or like fierce Death - 'एतत्स नरशार्दूलो नामृष्यत तवात्मजः | सलिलान्तर्गतः श्व महानाग इव श्वसन्|| तथासौ वाक्प्रतोदेन तुद्यमानः पुनः पुनः | वाचो न ममृषे राजन्नुत्तमाश्वः कशामिव ||..अन्तर्जलात्समुत्तस्थौ नागेन्द्र इव निःश्वसन्| उत्तिष्ठ पुत्रस्ते प्रतपन्रश्मिवानिव |..गदाहस्तं तु तं दृष्ट्वा सश्रृङ्गमिव पर्वतम्|| प्रजानामिव संक्रुद्ध शूलपाणिमिव स्थितम्|..सगदो भारतो भाति प्रतपन्भास्करो यथा || ..मेनि सर्वाभूतानि दण्डपाणिमिवान्तकम्||'. Seeing him *Pandavas* gleefully shook hands with their companions *Duryodhana* sees in this exuberance indecent and insulting display, with his brows twisted and an angry look at them, he thundered that he will kill all of them including *Krishna* - 'तमुत्तीर्णं तु संप्रेक्ष्य समहृष्यन्त सर्वशः पञ्चालाः पाण्डवेयाश्च तेऽन्योन्यस्य तलान् ददुः || अवहासं तु तं मत्वा पुत्रो दुर्योधनस्तव | उद्वृत्य नयने क्रुद्धो दिधक्षुरिव पाण्डवान्|| त्रिशिखा भ्रुकुटीं कृत्व संदष्टदशनच्छदः | प्रत्युवाच ततस्तान्वै पाण्डवान्सहकेशवान्|| अस्यावहासस्य फलं प्रतिभोक्षथ पान्डवाः | गमिष्यथ हताः सद्यः सपञ्चाला यमक्षयम्||'.*Sanjaya* describes his coming out of the lake with his might mace in hand, saying *Pandavas* saw him like mount *Kailas* or like an arrogant rogue elephant separated from his herd. But *Duryodhana* showed neither anxiety not any fear, nor dejection nor any remorse. He stood before them like a fearless lion 'तदात्वानममृष्यन्वै तव पुत्रोऽतिवीर्यवान्| प्रत्युपस्थित एवाशु मत्तो मत्तमिव द्विपम्|| गदाहस्तं तव सुत युद्धाय समुपस्थितम्| ददृशुः पाण्डवाः सर्वे कैलासमिव शृङ्गिणाम्||.. न संभ्रमो न च भयं न च ग्लानिर्न च व्यथा | आसीद्दुर्योधनस्यापि स्थितः सिंहइवाहवे ||'.

For once *Yudhishthira* seems to have been impressed by *Duryodhans's* words spoken like a true warrior, wondering why such supreme क्षत्र values did not influence him earlier! He reminds him that क्षत्रधर्म is very cruel, respecting no one. How come he speaks of righteousness in war, when it is he who got *Abhimanyu* killed fighting alone against all canons of क्षत्रधर्म. Therefore, *Duryodhana* should tie his disarranged hair, put on his armour and take from them any weapon he needs and fight 'मा भूदियं तव प्रज्ञा कृ निरपेक्षं सुनिर्घृणाम्| यथाभिमन्युं बहवो जघ्नुर्युधि महारथाः || क्षत्रधर्मं भृशं क्रूरं सुनिर्घृणम्| अन्यथा तु कथं हन्युरभिमन्युं तथा गतम्||...सर्वो विमृशते जन्तुः कृच्छ्रस्थो धर्मदर्शनम्| पदस्थः पिहितं द्वारं परलोकस्य पश्यति || आमुञ्च कवचं वीर मूर्धजान्यमयस्व च | यच्चान्यदपि ते नास्ति तदप्यादत्स्व भारत ||'.

Yudhishthira may be lauded by chroniclers as the embodiment of धर्म but *Krishna* himself did not think seeing considering his offer more as unfortunate, foolish and extremely dangerous in the circumstances practical wisdom seem to overweigh the righteous principles, telling him that it was like offering fair play to a cunning fox or a vicious wolf. He becomes angry with *Yudhishthira* and reprimands him saying *Duryodhana* challenging any one them, none of whom are equal to him in fighting with maces, was suicidal because *Duryodhana* is undoubtedly more skillful than *Bhima*, no one

even a god being capable of defeating him in a righteous struggle and even *Bhima* at this moment is d, though stronger. The success won through hard and horrible war has now been frittered away lishly by *Yudhishthira* like a gambler 'एवं दुयोधने राजन्गर्जमाने मुहुर्मुहुः | युधिष्ठिरस्य संकुद्धो वासुदेवोऽब्रवीदिदम्|| ..किमिदं माहसं त्वया व्याहृतमीश्दृशम्| एकमेव निहत्याजौ भव गजा कुरुष्विति || न समर्थानहं मन्ये गदाहस्तस्य संयुगे |...कथं नाम भवेत्कार्यमस्माभिर्भाग्तर्षभ || साहसं गस्त्वं तु ह्यनुकोशान्ननृपोत्तम | न्यायमस्यानुपशयामि प्रतियोद्धारमाहवे || ऋते वृकोदरात्पार्थात्स च नातिकृतश्रमः || तदिदं द्यूतमारब्धं पुनरेव यथा पुरा || बली समर्थश्च कृति गजा सुयोधनः | बलवान्वा कृती वेति कृती गजनर्विशिष्यते || सोऽयं गजस्त्वया शत्रुः समे पथि निवेशितः | न्यस्तश्वात्मा सुविषमे कृच्छमापादिता || को नु सर्वान्विनिर्जित्य शत्रूनेकेन वैरिणा || कृच्छपाप्तेन च तथा हाग्यंदगज्यभागतम्| पणित्वा चैकपाणेन रोचयेदेवमाहवम्|| न हि पश्यामि तं लोके योऽद्य दुर्यो णे | गदाहस्त विजेतुं वै शक्तः स्यादमरोऽपि हि ||...जेतुं न्यायेन शक्तो वै कृती राजा सुयोधनः || वृकोदरं समासाद्य संशयो वै जये हि नः | न्यायतो युध्यमानानां ह्येष महाबलः ||'.

Even for *Bhima* the conversation between *Yudhishthira* and *Duryodhana* was not palatable. declares that he will fight *Duryodhana* and kill him, his mace being as powerful. Let people see him htiong whom even gods, possessed of great weapons can never think of defeating, what to speak of *ryodhana.* The anger which he had suppressed since long was burning in him like fire with which *una* had burnt the *Khandava* forests. 'अहं सुयोधनं संख्ये हनिष्यमि न संशयः || विजयो वै धुवः कृष्ण धर्मराजस्य दृश्यते | अध्यर्धेन नय गदा गुरुतरी मम || न तथा धार्तराष्ट्रय मा कार्षीर्माधव व्ययाम्| अहमेनं हि गदया संयुगे योद्धुमुत्सहे || भवन्तः पेक्षकाः सर्वे मम सन्तु जनार्दन | सामरानपि गस्त्रीन्नानाशस्त्रधरान् युधि || योधयेयं रणे कृष्ण किमुताद्य सुयोधनम्|..अद्य कोधं विमोक्ष्यामि निहितं हृदये भृशम्| सुयोधने धार्तराष्ट्रे खाण्डवेऽग्निमिवार्जुन ||'. erefore, when he sees *Duryodhana* standing before him *he tells* him to remember all the insults aped and humiliating deeds performed by his towards them. Because of him the *Bhishma* is still lying the bed of arrows and *Drona, Karna* and all his brothers and companions are now dead. Only who is cause for the destruction o the family remains whom he will kill without slightest doubt 'गज्ञापि धृतराष्ट्रेण ा अस्मासु यत्कृतम्| स्मर तद्दुष्कृतं कर्म यद्भूतं वारणावते ||..त्वत्कृते निहतः शेते शरतल्पे महायशाः | गाङ्गेयो भरतश्रेष्ठः सर्वेषां नः पितामहः || हतो द्रोणश्च र्णश्च हतः शल्यः प्रतापवान्| वैरस्य चादिकर्तासौ शकुनिर्निहतो रणे ||..आवाशिष्टस्त्वमेवैकः कुलघ्नोऽधमपुरुषः | त्वामप्यद्य हनिष्यामि गदया नात्र संशयः ||'.

With life-long rivalry and hatred for *Bhima, Duryodhana* was not one to suffer these offensive vectives. He replies *Bhima* saying what is th use of using worthless words, He tells *Bhima* that he is anding before him, therefore, he should fight showing the strength which he claims to possess intead talking frivolous words, like waterless clouds during spring season. There is no one in the worlds who ould defeat him with mace his hand 'किं कत्थितेन बहुना युद्ध्यस्वाद्य मया सह | अद्य तेऽहं विनेष्यामि युद्धश्रद्धां वृकोदर || गदिनं कोऽद्य मां र हन्तुमुत्सहते रिपुः | न्यायतो युद्ध्यमानश्च देवेष्वपि पुरन्दरः || मा वृथा गर्ज कौन्तेय शारदाभ्रमिवाजलम्| दर्शयस्व बलं युद्धे यवत्तत्तेऽद्य विद्यते ||'.

When the battle between them was about to start, *Balarama* arrives to observe the skill of his vo prominent disciples. *Balarama* had not taken part in the *Kurukshetra* war, preferring to go on a ilgrimage so that he may not have to fight in the camp opposite where *Krishna* would stand. Therefore, nowing the fondness of his teacher towards him, *Duryodhana* was especially pleased to see him. *rishna* and *Pandavas* offer him their greetings, *Duryodhana* and *Bhima* following thereafter. *udhishthira* tells *Balarama* that *Kurukshetra* is an auspicious place where death assures one heavenly bode 'मया श्रुतं कथयतामृषीणां राजसत्तम || कुरुक्षेत्रं परं पुण्यं पावनं स्वर्ग्यमेव च | दैवतैर्ऋषिभिर्जुष्टं ब्राह्मणैश्च महात्मभिः || तत्र वै योत्स्यमाना ये देहं त्यक्ष्यन्ति नवाः | तेषां स्वर्गे धुवो वासः शक्रेण सह मारिष || तस्मात् समन्तपाञ्चकमितो याम द्रुतं नृप | प्रथितोत्तरवेदी सा देवलोके प्रजापतेः || तस्मिन्महापुण्यतमे त्रैलोक्यस्य नातने | संग्रामे निधनं प्राप्य धुवं स्वर्गे भविष्यति ||'. Therefore they all proceed to that holy place, even as *Duryodhana* allowed them on foot carrying his mighty mace 'ततो दुर्योधनो राजा प्रगृह्य महतीं गदाम्| पद्भ्याममर्षी द्युतिमानगच्छत्पाण्डवैः सह ||'.

Coming to *Kurukshetra Balarama's* both disciples confront each other angrily, bold like lions and swift as antelopes, looking at each other furitively. *Duryodhana* declares in the very presence of *Balarama* and *Krishna* that let all witness his skill in this encounter with *Bhima* 'उभौ भरतशार्दूलौ विक्रमेण समन्वितै | सिंहाविव दुराधर्षौ गदायुद्धनिशारदौ || रोषात्प्रस्फुरमानौष्टौ निरीक्षन्तौ परस्परम्|| तौ समेतौ महात्मानौ गदा हस्तौ नरोत्तमौ |..ततो दुर्योधनो राजन्निदमाह युधिष्ठिरम्|| भ्रातृभिः सहितं कृष्णेन महात्मना | रामेणामितवीर्येण वाक्यं शौटीर्यसम्मतम्|| इद व्यवसित युद्धं मम भीमस्य चोभयोः || इपोपविष्टाः पश्यध्वं सहितैनृपपुङ्गवैः |'. When he beckons *Bhima* inauspicious signs are seen, 'प्रादुरासन्सुघोराणि रूपाणि विविधान्युत |, storm lashes, clouds conceal the quarters. *Bhima's* anger was like the fire which destroyed *Khanadva* forests, assuring *Yudhishthira* that he will kill *Duryodhana* a blot on the fair name of the *Kuru* family. 'ववुर्वाताः सनिर्घाताः पांशुवर्षं

पपात च | वभूवश्च दिशः सर्वास्निर्मिरेण समावृता ||.. अद्य कोधं विमोक्षयामि निगूढं हृदयं चिरम्|| सुयोधने कौरवेन्द्रे खाण्डवेऽग्निमिवार्जुनः ||.. अद्यायुर्धार्तराष्ट्रस्य तेऽकृतात्मनः || समाप्तं भरतश्रेष्ठ मातापित्राश्च दर्शनम्| अद्य सौख्यं तु राजेन्द्र कुरुराजस्य दुर्मतेः || समाप्तं च महाराज नारीणां दर्शनं पुनः | अद्यायं कुरुराजस्य शान्तनोः कुलपांसनः ||'.

Thus begins the battle between *Duryodhana* and *Bhima*, time having come for offering final oblation in the great Sacrifice, which *Karna* had prophetically visualized as the culmination of the struggle between *Kauravas* and *Pandavas*. When *Sanjaya* relates these unpleasant repartees between the two warriors, *Dhritarashtra* laments saying, *Fie upon human life that it should end in this manner* his son giving commanded once eleven battalions had now to fight on foot with only a mace in hand. Becoming the ruler of king once he has to walk on foot. What could one say except that all this is indeed fate that is operating 'धिगस्तु खलु मानुष्यं यस्य निष्ठेयमीदृशी | एकादशचमूभर्ता यत्र पुत्रो ममानघ || आज्ञाप्य सर्वान्नृपतीन्भुक्त्वा चेमां वसुन्धरा गदामादाय वेगेन पदातिः प्रस्थितो रणे || भूत्वा हि जगतो नाथो ह्यनाथ इव मे सुतः | गदामुद्यम्य यो याति किमन्यद्भागधेयतः ||'.

The battle begins each one grunting loudly at the other. *Bhima* provokes *Duryodhana* again and again to remember the indignities heaped on them and for having been the cause for the death of the respected elders and his brothers 'राज्ञश्च धृतराष्ट्रस्य तथा त्वमपि चात्मनः || स्मर तद्दुष्कृतं कर्म यद्वृत्तं वारणावते |... तत्सर्वं पातयाम्य दिष्ट्या दृष्टोऽसि दुर्मते || त्वत्कृतेऽसौ हतः शेते शरतल्पे प्रतापवान्| गाङ्गेयो रथिनां श्रेष्ठो निहतो याज्ञसेनिना ||.. भ्रातरस्ते हताः सर्वे शूरा विक्रान्तयोधिनः But *Duryodhana* was not one to be left behind in exchanging repartees, telling *Bhima* not waste time since his own long desired wish is about to be fulfilled by gods 'न हि दुर्योधनः क्षुद्र केनचित् त्वद्विधेन वै | शक्यस्त्रासयितुं वाचा यथान्यः प्राकृतो नरः || चिरकालेप्सितं दिष्ट्या हृदयस्थमिदं मम | त्वया सह गदायुद्धं त्रिदशैरुपपादितम्|| किं वाचा बहुनोक्तेन कत्थितेन च दुर्मते | वाणि सम्पादयस्वाद्य कर्मणा मा चिरं कृथाः ||'.

In the battle that follows no one seems to have any upper hand over the other seeing which *Arjuna* becomes concerned and asks *Krishna* about the strength of each other, 'अनयोर्वीरयोर्युद्धे को ज्यायानभवन्मतः | कस्य वा को गुणो भूयानेतद्वद जनार्दन ||. *Krishna* in fair assessment replies that both were trained by *Balaram* and though *Bhima* is stronger it is *Duryodhana* who is strong and skillful. Therefore, *Bhima* will not be able to defeat him by adopting righteous means but only through deceptive ones. Then he commends deception as a righteous course to be used ion this case even as gods used deception to defeat *asuras*. This appears to be strange justification for one who had come to establish righteous. But Krishna had come established in human form endowed with attributes and inclinations born of nature, that as he would be explaining *Uttanka Bhargava*, he operates in human form as a human would do, and that in *Kali yuga* he is obliged to perform acts as would be suitable to the age and persons thereon. For *Krishna* as a parson who is supremely conscious of his *divine essence*, there is nothing that is righteous or unrighteous, noble or ignoble, auspicious and inauspicious, moral and immoral all contrary and contradictory attributes and inclinations being completely integrated and merged in him. In fact he is *Krishna*, whose colour is black in which all the diverse colours become one, all colours loosing their individual characteristics and attributes.

Therefore, he advises *Bhima* to breach *Duryodhana's* thigh, who having taken such a vow earlier though against rules for righteous battle. If he desires to fight in righteous manner, then *Yudhishthira* can only hope to see only unhappy days. *Yudhishthira* having placed all in difficult position, he finds not other way - 'उपदेशोऽनयोस्तुल्यो भीमस्तु बलवत्तरः | कृती यत्नपरस्त्वेष धार्तराष्ट्रो वृकोदरात्|| भीमसेनस्तु धर्मेण युद्ध्यमानो न जेष्यति | अन्यायेन तु युध्यन्वै हन्यादेव सुयोधनम्|| मायया निर्जिता देवैरसुरा इति नः श्रुतम् ..प्रतिज्ञातं च भीमसेनेन द्यूतकाले धनंजय | ऊरू भेत्स्यामि द्यूतकाले धनंजय ऽ सोऽयं प्रतिज्ञां तां चापि पालयत्वरिकर्षणः | मायाविनं तु राजानं माययैव निकृन्ततु || यद्येष बलमास्थाय न्यायेन प्रहरिष्यति | विषमस्थस्ततो राजा भविष्यति युधिष्ठिरः || पुनरेव वक्ष्यामि पाण्डवेय निबोध मे | धर्मराजापराधेन भय नः पुनरागतम्||.. अबुद्धिरेषा महती धर्मराजस्य पाण्डव || यदेकविजये युद्धं पणितं घोरमीदृशम्|'.

Krishna tells him that *Shukracharya* had earlier opined that when all others die in battle and one alone remains alive, then such one should be feared and not be heedlessly challenged and provoked, sync his determination is strengthened and resolve is steeled. Let every one hope that *Pandavas* may not have to return to *Duryodhana* all the lands won earlier through courage and perseverance back. For

rteen years *Duryodhana* has steeled himself to fight *Bhima* in a battle with his mace. If *Bhima* does kill him now even if he had to use unrighteous methods, then *Duryodhana* will surely be the king of *Kurus* again 'सुयोधनः कृती वीर एकायनगतस्तथा || अपि चोशानसा गीतः श्रूयतेऽयं पुरातनः | श्लोकस्तत्त्वार्थसहितस्तन्मे निगदतः शृणु || पुनरावर्तना भग्नानां जीवितैषिणाम्| भेतव्यमरिशेषाणामेकायनगता हिते || साहसोत्पतितानां च निराशानां च जीविते | न शक्यमग्रतः स्थातुं शक्रेणापि धनंजय || धनमिम भग्नं हतसैन्यं ह्रद गतम्| पराजितं वनप्रेप्सुं निराशं राज्यलम्भने || को न्वेष संयुगे प्राज्ञः पुनर्द्वन्द्वे समाह्वयेत् | अपि नो निर्जितं राज्यं न हरेत सुयोधनः | योदशवर्षाणि गदया कृतनिश्रमः | चरत्यूर्ध्वं च तिर्यक् च भीमसेनजिघांसया || एनं चेन्न महाबाहुरन्यायेन हनिष्यति | एष वः कौरवो राजा धार्तराष्ट्रो भविष्यति ||'.

A word to the wise is enough and *Arjuna* was a wise person. When he heard *Krishna's* words, took the hint and gave a hint to *Bhima* of his vow to kill *Duryodhana* by breaching his thigh. Even ough the step was unrighteous, *Bhima* takes the hint and begins going round and round in circles, ockwise and anti-clockwise confusing *Duryodhana*, seeing which *Duryodhana* being confused takes s steps around likewise - 'धनजयस्तु श्रुत्वैतत्केशवस्य महात्मनः | प्रेक्षतो भीमसेनस्य सव्यमूरुमताडयत्|| गृह्य संज्ञां ततो भीमो गदया व्यचरद्रणे | मण्डलानि विचित्राणि यमकानीतराणि च || दक्षिणं मण्डलं सव्यं गोमूत्रकमथापि च | व्यचरत्पाण्डवो राजन्नरिं सम्मोहयन्निव || तथैव तव पुत्रोऽपि गदामार्गविशारदः | चरल्लघु चित्र च भीमसेनजिघांसया ||'. Even as each was avoiding other sparing each other's blows, *Duryodhana* ves a powerful blow on *Bhima* with his mace, which makes him stagger and stunned. Even as *Bhima* as rising to his feet, *Duryodhana* rushes to hit him again lifting him high above and dashs him on the oor. Realizing his intent, *Bhima* rushes towards him with fury of a lion and hits his left thigh so rcefully that it breaks under the mighty blow and makes *Duryodhana* fall stunned and shattered 'अमन्यत यतं ह्येन प्रहरिष्यन्तमाहवे | अतो न प्रहरन्तस्मै पुनरेव नवात्मजः || तमापतन्तं सम्प्रेक्ष्य संरब्धममितौजसम्| मोघमस्य प्रहारं तं चिकीर्षुर्भरतर्षभ ||.. अबुद्ध्यद्भीमसेनस्तु त्रस्तस्य चिकीर्षितम्| अथास्य समभिद्रुत्य समुत्क्रुश्य च सिंहवत्|| सृत्या वञ्चयतो राजन् पुनरेवोत्पतिष्यतः | ऊरुभ्यां प्राहिणोद्राजन्गदां वेगेन पाण्डवः || सा वज्रनिष्पेषसमा प्रहिता भीमकर्मणा | ऊरू दुर्योधनस्याथ बभञ्ज प्रियदर्शनौ || स पपात नरव्याघ्रो वसुधामनुनादयन्| भग्नोरुर्भीमसेनेन पुत्रस्तव महीपते ||'.

As *Duryodhana* sinks on his knees, strange sign are seen, great winds blow, lightening flashes, ees and mountains tremble, even a comet streak across the sky falling far in distance. Seeing *Duryodhana* fall, *Indra* pours rain of blood, *yakshas, rakshasas* and *pishachas* create commotion, their proar resounding around the quarters. *Pandavas* become vexed seeing these strange portends. Gods who had gathered in the sky to see this momentous battle returning to their respective stations stunned to silence 'ववुर्वाताः सनिर्घाताः पांशुवर्षं पपात च | चचाल पृथिवी चापि सवृक्षक्षुपपर्वता || तस्मिन्निपतिते वीरे पत्यौ सर्वमहीक्षिताम्|| महास्वना पुनर्दीप्ता सनिर्घाता भयंकरी || पपात चोल्का महती पतिते पृथिवीपतौ | तथा शोणितवर्षं च पांशुवर्षं च भारत || ववर्ष मघवांस्तत्र तव पुत्रे निपातिते | यक्षाणां राक्षसानां च पिशाचानां तथैव च || अन्तरिक्षे महानादः श्रूयते भरतर्षभ |..ययुर्देवा यथाकामं गन्धर्वाप्सरसस्तथा || कथयन्तोऽद्भूतं युद्धं सुतयोस्तव भारत |'.

Pandavas were pleased to see *Duryodhana* fall on the ground, *Bhima* becoming excited begins dancing around the fallen warrior shouting *bull*, *bull* as earlier *Kauravas* did around them earlier in the assembly when *Draupadi* was being humiliated. Then in a graceless display he kicks him on his head with his left foot - 'गौर्गौरिति पुरा मन्द द्रौपदीमेकवाससम्| यत्सभायां हसन्नस्मांस्तदा वदसि दुर्मते || तस्यावहासस्य फलमद्य त्वं समवाप्नुहि | एवमुक्त्वा स वामेन पदा मौलिमुपास्पृशत्|| शिरश्च राजसिंहस्य पादेन समलोडयत्|'. Seeing this demeaning behaviour, *Somakas* were displeased and did not come forward to congratulate him. *Yudhishthira* admitted that though he feels released from his vow, this unrighteous action of kicking *Duryodhana's* head pained him exceedingly as most improper and unrighteous. He is a royal besides he is also their cousin, who deserves respect not humiliation, especially when he had neither his brothers around nor counselors nor even some who could offer him funeral oblations. He deserves compassion and consideration, not hate or humiliation. *Bhima* was known for righteousness, therefore, how is it that he should behave in such manner - 'हृष्टेन राजन्कुरुसत्तमस्य क्षुद्रात्मना भीमसेनेन पादम्| दृष्ट्वा कृतं मूर्धनि नाभ्यनन्दन् धर्मात्मानः सोमकानां प्रबर्हाः ||..गतोऽसि वैरस्यानृण्यं प्रतिज्ञा पूरिता त्वया | शुभेनाथाशुभेनैव कर्मणा विरमाधुना || मा शिरोऽस्य पदा मर्दिर्मा धर्मस्तेऽतिगो भवेत्| राजा ज्ञातिर्हतश्चायं नैतन्न्याय्यं तवानघ ||.. हतबन्धुर्हतामात्यो भ्रष्टसैन्यो हतो मृधे | सर्वाकारेण शोच्योऽय नावहास्योऽयमीश्वरः || विध्वस्तोऽयं हतामात्यो हतभ्राता हतप्रजाः | उत्सन्नपिण्डो भ्राता च नैतन्न्याय्यं कृतं त्वया || धार्मिको भीमसेनोऽसावित्याहुस्त्वा पुरा जनाः | स कस्मद् भीमसेन त्वं राजानमधिनिष्ठसि ||.

Yudhishthira is righteous person too noble to hit one who is fallen down. So he goes to *Duryodhana* with tears in his eyes and asks him not to be angry with them over what has happened. Every one has to suffer for the things which one has done and having caused these things through pride,

arrogance and greed. He should therefore not grieve but revel in his glorious death. In fact, even those who remain alive will have to lament for rest of their lives without relatives. He himself wonders how he will face the ladies who are now widows, while *Duryodhana* would be well-established in the heavens. Saying thus *Yudhishthira* fell in great despondency 'तात मन्युर्न कार्यो नात्मा शोच्यस्त्वया तथा | नूनं पूर्वकृतं कर्म सुघोरमनुभूयते धात्रोपदिष्टं विषमं नूनं फलमसंस्कृतम्| यद् वयं त्वां जिघांसामस्त्वं चास्मान्कुरुसत्तम || आत्मनो ह्यपराधेन महद्व्यसनमीदृशम्| प्राप्तवानसि यल्लोभान्मदाद्बाल्याच्च भरत ||.. आत्मा न शोचनीयस्ते श्लाघ्यो मृत्युस्तवानघ | वयमेवाधुना शोच्याः सर्वावस्थासु कौरव || कृपणं वर्तयिष्यामस्तैर्विहीना बन्धुभिः प्रियैः | भ्रातृणां चैव पुत्राणां तथा वै शोकविह्वलाः || कथं द्रक्ष्यामि विधवा वधूः शोकपरिप्लुताः | त्वमेकः सुस्थितो राजन्स्वर्गे ते निलयो ध्रुवः ||'.

Chapter XIV

Balarama, who was present when the battle was fought by his two disciples, was displeased y the unrighteous manner in which the entire duel was played and the despicable display of humiliation f the fallen warrior when *Bhima* kicked *Duryodhana* on his head. Shouting at the top of his voice *Fie, 'hima, and Fie* that he has like an ignorant and ignoble one has hit him below his navel against the rescribed rules. Seeing his favorite disciple lying on the ground, *Balarama's* eyes became red with nger and turning to *Krishna* he rebuked him as well for allowing *Duryodhana* to be killed without bjecting the manner of humiliating one who has fallen in a battle - 'शिरस्याभिहतं दृष्ट्वा भीमसेनेन ते सुतम्| रामः प्रहरतां श्रेष्ठश्चुक्रोध बलवद्बली || ततो मध्ये नरेन्द्राणामूर्ध्वबाहुर्हलायुधः | कुर्वन्नार्तस्वरं घोरं धिग्धिग्भीमेत्युवाच ह || अहो धिग्यदधो नाभेः प्रहृतं धर्मविग्रहे | नैतद्दृष्टं गदायुद्धे कृतवान्यद्वृकोदरः || अधो नाभ्यां न हन्तव्यमिति शास्त्रस्य निश्चयः | अयं त्वशास्त्रविन्मूढः स्वच्छन्दात्सम्प्रवर्तते ||..न चैष पतितः कृष्ण केवलं मत्समः समः || आश्रितस्य तु दौर्बल्यादाश्रयः परिभूयते |'. *Balarama* was so infuriated that raising his plough-weapon and hining like a mountain rushed towards *Bhima*, seeing whom though *Bhima* was not distressed, *Krishna* ame and intervened restraining *Balarama* with soothing words and embracing with his arms. *Sanjaya* ays that when they embraced together, they resembled like snow bound *Kailas* standing besides the lark firm mountain or like the moon and Sun are both to be seen in the sky in the evening 'ततो लाङ्गलमुद्यम्य भीममभ्यद्रवद्बली || तस्योर्ध्वबाहोः सदृशं रूपमासीन्महात्मनः | बहुधातुविचित्रस्य श्वेतस्येव महागिरेः || भ्रातृभिः सहितो भीमः सज्जैरस्त्रकोविदैः | न विव्यथे महाराज दृष्ट्वा हलधरं बली || तमुत्पतन्तं जग्राह केशवो विनयान्वितः बाहुभ्यां पीनवृत्ताभ्यां प्रयत्नाद्बलवद्बली || सितासितौ यदुवरौ शुशुभातेऽधिकं तदा | नगताविव राजेन्द्र कैलासाञ्जनपर्वतौ | नभोगतौ यथा राजंश्चन्द्रसूर्यौ दिनक्षये ||'.

A consummate diplomat that he was, *Krishna* explains the rationale to be adopted during war and according to the period, place and persons, saying that one's future growth and advancement depends o the growth and advancement of one's friend, and one's friend's friend. He points out six types of responses which one should rely : on the one hand one's own intelligence, intelligence of one's friend, intelligence of one's friend's friend and on the other hand on weakness of one's enemy, weakness of enemy's friend and weakness of enemy's friend's friend. If one does not practice in this manner then he is sure to suffer and be miserable. Then on practical grounds and as political sagacity he reminds his brother that *Pandavas* were their natural companions being their aunt's sons *Kauravas* having behaved unjustly with them. Their own prosperity, therefore, is bound with the prosperity of the *Pandavas*. Fulfilling one's vow is the greatest virtue for a *Kshatriya* and *Bhima* having taken earlier a vow was obliged to kill *Duryodhana* even if he has to break his thigh, even sage *Maitreya* having cursed *Duryodhana* in this manner. Therefore, in the given circumstances *Bhima* could not be said to have faulted in fulfilling his vow. Therefore, he sees not transgression and *Balarama* should restrain his anger 'उवाच चैनं सरब्धं शमयन्निव केशवः | आत्मवृद्धिर्मित्रवृद्धिर्मित्रमित्रोदयस्तथा | विपरीतं द्विषात्स्वपतनं षड्विधा वृद्धिरात्मनः || आत्मन्यपि च मित्रे च विपरीतं यदा भवेत्|| तदा विद्यान्मनोग्लानिमाशु शान्तिकरो भवेत्| अस्माकं सहजं मित्रं पाण्डवाः शुद्धपौरुषाः || स्वकाः पितृष्वसुः पुत्रास्ते परैर्निकृता भृशम्|| प्रतिज्ञापालनं धर्मः क्षत्रियस्येह वेदम्यहम्|| सुयोधनस्य गदया भङ्क्तास्म्यूरू महाहवे | इति पूर्वं प्रतिज्ञातं भीमेन हि सभातले || मैत्रेयेणाभिशप्तश्च पूर्वमेव महर्षिणा | ऊरू ते भेत्स्यते भीमो गदयेति परंतप || अतो दोषं न पश्यामि मा क्रुद्धस्व प्रलम्बहन्| यौनैः स्वैः सुग्रहार्दैश्च सम्बन्धः सह पाण्डवैः || तेषां वृद्ध्या हि वृद्धिर्नो मा क्रुधः पुरुषर्षभ |'.

Krishna's shrewd arguments do not satisfy *Balarama's* simple, straightforward, upright nature and inclination. *Krishna's* all attempts to rationalize the conduct of the *Pandavas* as righteous ones did not satisfy *Balarama* who sarcastically exclaimed that people appear righteous so long as wealth and desires do not interfere when one judges their actions. One who having wealth enjoys his desires without violating righteousness, or who enjoys wealth and righteousness without violating desires or one who enjoys desires and righteousness without violating wealth he alone, only that person in his opinion, deserves extended happiness. *Bhima* having harmed righteousness has distorted every norm

and standard. 'वासुदेववचः श्रुत्वा सीरभृत्प्राह धर्मवित्|| धर्मः सुचरितः सद्भिः स च द्वाभ्यां नियच्छति | अर्थश्चात्यर्थलुब्धस्य कामश्चातिप्रसङ्गिणः || ध थौं धर्मकामौ च कामार्थौ चाप्यपीडयन्| धर्मार्थकामान्योऽभ्यैति सोऽत्यन्तं सुखमश्नुते || तदिदं व्याकुलं सर्वं कृतं धर्मस्य पीडनात्| भीमसेनेन गोविन्द काम यथाऽऽत्थ माम्||'.

Krishna's oration does not impress simple minded *Balarama*. Seeing that he has not been abl to make any impression, *Krishna* consoles him saying that there are not doubts about his renown in th world, as righteous person and keen on righteousness. Many die in unrighteous manner during wa which shows that the long shadow of *Kali* age is casting its shadow on people's mind. Therefore, takin in consideration that *Bhima's* vow to kill *Duryodhana* was taken in the prevailing times an circumstances one is oblisged to say there was no unrighteousness in fulfilling one's vow, realizing tha earlier even *Duryodhana* had instigated *Karna* and others to kill *Abhimanyu* in unrighteous manne Besides *Duryodhana* was by birth greedy and a blot on the renown of *Kuru* family therefore came to di in *Bhima's* hands. *Bhima's* vow was known for thirteen long years, how can one say that *Duryodhan* was not aware of the same ? *Duryodhana* wanted to kill *Bhima* unrighteously lifting and dashing him o the ground, therefore, even *Bhima* had to breach his thigh_ 'प्राप्तं कलियुगं विद्धि प्रतिज्ञा पाण्डवस्य च | अनृण्यं यातु वैरस्य प्रतिज्ञायाश्च पाण्डवः || गतः पुरुषशार्दूलो हत्वा नैकृतिकं रणे | अधर्मो विद्यते नात्र यद्भीमो हतवान् रिपुम्|| युद्धयन्तं समरे वीरं कुरुवृष्णियशस्करम्| अनेन कर्ण संदिष्टः पृष्ठतो धनुरच्छिनत् ||..जन्मप्रभृतिलुब्धश्च पापश्चैव दुरात्मवान्| निहतो भीमसेनेन दुर्बुद्धिः कुलपांसनः || प्रतिज्ञां भीमसेनस्य त्रयोदशसमार्जिताम्| किमर्थ नाभिजानाति युद्धयमानोऽपि विश्रुताम्|| ऊर्ध्वमुत्क्रम्य वेगेन जिघांसन्तं वृकोदरः | बभञ्ज गदया चोरू न स्थानो न च मण्डले ||'.

Balarama was neither convinced nor satisfied with *Krishna's* explanations. Then declaring that *Bhima* will be known in the world as one who killed *Duryodhana* in unrighteous manner and *Duryodhana* going to heavenly worlds having been killed when fighting a righteous battle, he climbed his chariot and departed to *Dvaraka*. All those left behind were extremely disturbed 'धर्मच्छलमपि श्रुत्वा केशवात्स विशाम्पते | नैव प्रीतमना रामो वचनं प्राह संसदि || हत्वाधर्मेण राजानं धर्मात्मानं सुयोधनम्| जिह्मयोधीति लोकेऽस्मिन्ख्यातिं यास्यति पाण्डवः || दुर्योधनोऽपि धर्मात्मा गतिं यास्यति शाश्वतीम्| ऋजुयोधी हतो राजा धार्तराष्ट्रो नराधिपः ||'. Seeing the turn of events, *Yudhishthira* became sad, quiet and despondent, making his resolve waver. Seeing which, *Krishna* asks him how was it that he remained quiet when *Bhima* unrighteously kicked *Duryodhana's* head as he lay dying. *Yudhishthira* sadly agreed that though he was neither pleased with *Bhima's* behaviour nor at the destruction of the *Kuru* family. But *Dhritarashtra's* sons had evil intentions towards them and *Bhima's* heart was full of anger; therefore he overlooked the transgression hoping that his anger may thereby be assuaged. *Krishna* kept quiet saying let that be so. While all others were commending *Bhima's* actions, *Arjuna* did not commend his actions one way or the other 'ततो युधिष्ठिरं दीनं चिन्तापरमधोमुखम्| शोकोपहतसंकल्पं वासुदेवोऽब्रवीदिदम्|| धर्मराज किमर्थं त्वमधर्ममनुमन्यसे | हतबन्धोर्य देतस्य पतितस्य विचेतसः || दुर्योधनस्य भीमेन मृद्यमानं शिरः पदा | उपप्रेक्षसि कस्मात्त्वं धर्मज्ञः सन्नराधिप || न ममैतत्प्रियं कृष्ण यद्राजानं वृकोदरः | पदा मूर्ध्न स्पृशत् क्रोधान्न च हृष्ये कुलक्षये || निकृत्या निकृता नित्यं धृतराष्ट्रसुतैर्वयम्| बहूनि परुषाण्युक्त्वा वनं प्रस्थापिताः स्म ह || भीमसेनस्य तद्दुःखमतीव हृदि वर्तते | इति संचिन्त्य वार्ष्णेय मयैतत्समुपेक्षितम्|| तस्माद्धत्वाकृतप्रज्ञं लोभ्यं कामवशानुगम्| लभतां पाण्डवः कामं धर्मेऽधर्मे च वा कृते || अर्जुनोऽपि महाबाहुरप्रीतेनान्तरात्मना | नोवाच वचनं किंचिद्भ्रातरं साध्व साधु वा ||'.

Bhima stood before *Yudhsihthira* happy and humble declaring that the world has been liberated from enemies and misfortunes. The lands may be ruled safe, now that the enemies have been defeated 'प्रैवाच सुमहातेजा धर्मराजं युधिष्ठिरम्| हर्षादुत्फुल्लनयनो जितकाशी विशाम्पते || तवाद्य पृथिवी सर्वा क्षेमा निहतकण्टका | तां प्रशाधि महाराज स्वधर्म मनुपालय ||' *Yudhishthira* too was happy saying that with *Duryodhana's* death all hatred would finally come to end. With Krishna's help they have won the war. The debt which they owed to their mother is now redeemed - 'गतो वैरस्य निधनं हतो राजा सुयोधनः | कृष्णस्य मतमास्थाय विजितेयं वसुन्धरा || दिष्ट्या गतस्त्वमानृण्यं मातुः कोपस्य चोभयोः | दिष्ट्या जयति दुर्धर्ष दिष्ट्या शत्रुर्निपातितः ||'. While all were congratulating *Bhima* for his great deed, *Krishna* was not happy like a tree without its branches, observing that his immodest behaviour has done incalculable harm. *Duryodhana* was nearby like a tree without its branches, waiting for his death to come. Therefore, *Krishna* advised the *Pandavas* that he needs no further attention, with no friends or foes, lying like dried stump of wood. Fortunately the evil man is dead along with his brothers and companions, saying thus they left to their camps. 'न न्याय्यं निहितं शत्रुं भूयो हन्तुं नराधिपाः || असकृद्वाग्भिरुग्राभिर्निहतो ह्येष मन्दधीः | तदैवैष हतः पापो यदैव निरपत्रपः ||

धः पापसहायश्च सुहृदां शासनातिगः |..नैष योग्योऽद्य मित्रं वा शत्रुर्वा पुरुषाधमः || किमनोनातिभुग्नेन वाग्भिः काष्टसधर्मणा | रथेष्वारोहत क्षिप्रं गच्छामो र्धाधिपाः || दिष्ट्या हतोऽय पापात्मा मामात्यज्ञातिबान्धवः |'.

Listening to *Krishna*'s patronizing and condescending words, *Duryodhana* even as he lay wn suffering, lifts his body on his arm like a huge serpent whose tail was severed and angrily lashes at rishna calling him contemptuously as a relative of *Kamsa's* servant and questioning whether he was t ashamed of getting him killed in unrighteous manner. This he had observed when *Krishna* was ompting *Arjuna* to remind *Bhima* to smash his thigh! Does he not feel ashamed and disgusted for ving got many heroes like *Bhishma*, *Drona*, *Karna* and others killed unrighteously? 'इति श्रुत्वा त्वधिक्षेपं ग्णाद्दुर्योधनो नृपः || अमर्षवशमापन्न उदतिष्ठद्विशाम्पते | स्फिग्देशेनोपविष्टः स दोर्भ्यां विष्टभ्य मेदिनीम्|| दृष्टिं भ्रूमङ्कटां कृत्वा वासुदेवे न्यपातयत्| अर्धो तशरीरस्य रूपमासीन्नृपस्य तु || क्रुद्धस्याशीविषस्येव छिन्नपुच्छस्य भारत || प्राणान्तकरिणीं घोरां वेदनामप्यचिन्तयन्|| दुर्योधनो वासुदेवं वाग्भिरुग्राभिरर्दयन्| सदासस्य दायाद न ते लज्जास्त्यनेन वै || अधर्मेण गदायुद्धे यदहं विनिपातितः | ऊरू भिन्धीति भीमस्य स्मृतिं मिथ्या प्रयच्छता || किं न विज्ञातमेतन्मे र्जुनामवोचथाः | घातयित्वा महीपालानृजुयुद्धान्सहस्रशः || जिह्मैरुपायैर्बहुभिर्न ते लज्जा न ते घृणा |'.

Krishna then with equal vehemence reminds him the evil path which he, his brothers and other ompanions had taken, which cannot be allowed without severest punishment, even *Bhishma, Drona. arna* and others faced. Listening to *Shakauni* he had refused to give *Pandavas* their share in the aternal kingdom. *Bhishma* was fighting to harm *Pandava's* interest; therefore *Shikhandi* was used to ake him lay down his arms, which is not unrighteous deed. Departing from his own धर्म as *Brahmin*, *rona* had followed evil persons, *Drishtadhyumna* having to kill him. *Arjuna* never performs any emeaning action, even when many opportunities were available. It is for the fulfillment of the *divine ntent* and *purpose* that he, *Krishna* had to prevent *Karna* using *Naga* weapon. *Duryodhana* neither istened to moral teachings of *Brihaspati* and *Ushana* nor respected his elders and listened to their dvice. Greed and arrogance was all that made him *behave* and suffer as consequence 'हतस्त्वमसि गान्धारे भ्रातृसुतबान्धवः || सगणः ससुहृच्चैव पापं मार्गमनुष्ठितः | तवैव दुष्कृतैर्वीरौ भीष्मद्रोणौ निपातितौ || कर्णश्च निहतः संख्ये तव शीलानुवर्तकः | याच्यमानं मया मूढ पत्र्यमशं न दीत्सर्यासि || पाण्डवेभ्यः स्वराज्यं च लोभाच्छकुनिनिश्चयात्||..कुर्वाणं कर्म समरे पाण्डवानर्थकाङ्क्षिणम्| यच्छिखण्ड्यवधीद्भीष्मं मित्रार्थे न व्यतिक्रमः || वधर्मं पृष्ठतः कृत्वा आचार्यस्त्वत्प्रियेप्सया | पार्षतेन हतः संख्ये वर्तमानोऽसतां पथि || अर्जुनः समरे राजन्युध्यमानः कदाचन | निन्दितं पुरुषव्याघ्रः करोति न थंचन ||..देवानां मतमज्ञाय तेषां प्रियहितेप्सया | नार्जुनस्य महानागं मया व्यंसितमस्त्रजम्||.. बृहस्पतेरुशनसो नोपदेशः श्रुतस्त्वया || वृद्धा नोपासिताश्चैव हितं वाक्यं त ते श्रुतम्|'.

Duryodhana rejects *Krishna's* all charges and continues to claim that he is well versed in scriptures as he is charitable, ruling the kingdom conquering enemies. Therefore, he is sure to die like any *Kshatriya* would desire, having enjoyed wealth and prosperity which was not possible for many other rulers, human pleasures which only Gods enjoy. Therefore, who else could claim such glorious death like his? He is sure to go to heavens with his companions whereas *Pandavas* will live their lives with unfulfilled desires. He does not regret *Bhima* having kicked him on head, for in any case soon crows and eagles would have enjoyed his body 'अधीतं विधिवद्दत्तं भूः प्रशास्ता ससागरा || मूर्ध्नि स्थितममित्राणां को नु स्वन्ततरो मया | यदिष्टं क्षत्रबन्धूनां स्वधर्ममनुपश्यताम्|| तदिदं निधनं प्राप्तं को नु स्वन्ततरो मया | देवार्हा मानुषा भोगाः प्राप्ता असुलभा नृपैः || ऐश्वर्यं चोत्तमं प्राप्तं को नु स्वन्ततरो मया | ससुहृत् सानुगश्चैव स्वर्गं गन्तामहमच्युत || यूयं निहतसंकल्पाः शोचन्तो वर्तयिष्यथ | न मे विषादो भीमेन पादेन शिर आहतम्| काका वा कङ्कगृध्रा वा निधास्यन्ति पदं क्षणात्||'.

Sanjaya says that even as *Duryodhana* completed his words, flowers fell on him like a shower. *Gandharvas* played musical instruments and *Apsaras* sang songs eulogizing his brave deeds. Heavenly perfects declared *well done, well done*. Fragrant winds blew and quarters became luminous - 'अस्य वाक्यस्य निधने कुरुराजस्य धीमतः || अपतत्सुमहद् वर्षं पुष्पाणां पुण्यगन्धिनाम्| अवादयन्त गन्धर्वा वादित्रं सुमनोहरम्|| जगुश्चाप्सरसो राज्ञो यशःसम्बद्धमेव च | सिद्धाश्च मुमुचुर्वाचः साधु साध्विति पार्थिवः || ववौ च सुरभिर्वायुः पुण्यगन्धो मृदुः सुखः | व्यराजंश्च दिशः सर्वा नभो वैदूर्यसंनिभम्||'. Seeing these extra-ordinary events, *Krishna* and others became extremely embarrassed and disturbed hearing the accusation that *Bhisma, Drona. Karna and Bhurishrva* were killed in unrighteous manner - 'अत्यद्भुतानि ते दृष्ट्वा वासुदेवपुरोगमाः | दुर्योधनस्य पूजां तु दृष्ट्वा व्रीडामुपागमन्|| हतांश्चाधर्मतः श्रुत्वा शोकार्ताः शुशुचुर्हि ते | भीष्मं द्रोणं तथा कर्णं भूरिश्रवसमेव च ||'. Seeing *Pandavas* sad and dejected, *Krishna* admits in profound tone that *Duryodhana* was, indeed an

expert fighting with mace and *Bhishma, Drona* and others too were unconquerable even by gods. *Pandavas* would not have been successful, had they not used devious means to defeat them for the good of all. If *Duryodhana* was not tired then even he would not have been killed, even by *Time* through righteous manner. Therefore, it becomes necessary to kill evil persons even one has to use unrighteous methods 'तांस्तु चिन्तापरान्दृष्ट्वा पाण्डवान्दीनचेतसः | प्रोवाचेदं वचः कृष्णो मेघदुन्दुभिनिस्वनः || नैष शक्योऽतिशीघ्रास्त्रस्ते च सर्वे महारथाः | ऋजुयुद्धेन विक्रान्ता हन्तुं युष्माभिराहवे || नैष शक्यः कदाचित् तु हन्तुं धर्मेण पार्थिवः | ते वा भीष्ममुखाः सर्वे महेष्वासा महारथाः || मयानेकैरुपायैस्तु मायायोगेन चासकृत् हतास्ते सर्व एवाजौ भवतां हितमिच्छता || यदि नैवंविधं जातु कुर्यां जिह्ममहं रणे | कुतो वो विजयो भूयः कुतो राज्यं कुतो धनम्|| ते हि सर्वे महात्मानश्चत्वारोऽतिरथा भुवि || न शक्या धर्मतो हन्तुं लोकपालैरपि स्वयम्|| तथैवायं गदापाणिर्धार्तराष्ट्रो गतक्लमः | न शक्यो धर्मतो हन्तुं कालेनापीह दण्डिना || '. He then advised *Pandavas* not to be concerned with these things because all the avenues had to be used to defeat enemies. Even gods used such deception to defeat the *asuras*. Now that the task is fulfilled, they should go to their camps and rest, since night is about to fall. Then all of them along with *Krishna* leave for their camps celebrating their victory 'न च वो हृदि कर्तव्यं यदयं घातितो रिपुः | मिथ्यावध्यास्तथोपायै र्बहवः शत्रवोऽधिकाः || पूर्वैरनुगतो मार्गो देवैरसुरघातिभिः | सद्भिश्चानुगतः पन्थाः स सर्वैरनुगम्यते || कृतकृत्याश्च सायाह्ने निवासं रोचयामहे |'.

Skeptics ever keen to downgrade *Krishna's* spiritual essence have lways looked at his actions in temporal world on empirical considerations, declaring them how could one descended for establishing moral and ethical righteousness in the the worlds perform such actions which by his own admission are unrighteous. They doubt his divine descent and question his spiritual credentials, seeing him speak more as a human being nurtured in *real politic* than one who claims to be the god, god of gods, the supreme Brahman itself. They find fault with *Vyasa's* purpose and intent in presenting *Krishna* not as a temporal person but as a spiritual and metaphysical one. Therefore, though his actions appear strange and ambiguous, but it does not appear illogical, immoral and unjust when one views his actions on cosmic level, when even as tempests and typhoons and earthquakes and floods do not appear strange and illogical or immoral when both evil and noble people have to suffer for no apparent fault seen in them. *Krishna* makes it clear in *Bhagavad Gita*, 'समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु न मे द्वेष्योऽस्ति न प्रियः ||', 'यथा सर्वगतं सौक्ष्म्यादाकाशं नोपलिप्यते सर्वत्रावस्थितो देहे तथात्मा नोपलिप्यते || यथा प्रकाशयत्येकः कृत्स्नं लोकमिमं रविः | क्षेत्रं क्षेत्री तथा कृत्स्नं प्रकाशयति भारत || क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोरेवमन्तरं ज्ञानचक्षुषा भूतप्रकृतिमोक्षं च ये विदुर्यान्ति ते परम्||'. Therefore, it would be naïve and foolish to gauge *Krishna's* actions on human and empirical level. Only those who become aware of his supreme *divine status* only they understand and reach to that understanding.

With *Duryodhana's* death, *Kuruskshtra* war all-purpose came to an end, prompting *Krishna* to ask *Arjuna* to lower his *Gandeev* bow and alight from the chariot so that he may follow thereafter. *Arjuna* hesitates since it is customary for the charioteer to alight first and thereafter the warrior to follow. But *Krishna* insists that he alone should alight first, which he does reluctantly. The moment *Arjuna* alights from the chariot, *Hanuman* on the flag mast on the chariot disappears and the chariot, which had earlier sheltered *Arjuna* from fire-spitting arrows shot by *Drona* and *Karna* catches fire and is soon reduced to ashes, together with the horses and ensigns - 'ततो गाण्डीवधन्वानमभ्यभाषत केशवः | स्थितः प्रियहिते नित्यमतीव भरतर्षभ || अवरोपय गाण्डीवमक्षयौ च महेषुधी | अथाहमवरोक्ष्यामि पश्चाद्भरतसत्तम || स्वयं चैवावरोह त्वमेतच्छ्रेयस्तवानघ | तच्चाकरोत्तथा वीरः पाण्डुपुत्रो धनंजयः 55 अथ पश्चात्ततः कृष्णो रश्मीनुत्सृज्य वाजिनाम्| अवारोहत मेधावी रथाद्गाण्डीवधन्वनः || अथावतीर्णे भूतानामीश्वरे सुमहात्मनि | कपिरन्तर्दधे दिव्यो ध्वजो गाण्डीवधन्वनः || स दग्धो द्रोणकर्णाभ्यां दिव्यैरस्त्रैर्महारथः | अथादीप्तोऽग्निना ह्याशु प्रजज्वाल महीपते ||'.

Seeing this unexpected sight every one is surprised, *Arjuna* asking *Krishna* the reasons for this strange event. *Krishna* clarifies that the chariot was already reduced to ashes by the fire-spitting arrows discharged by *Drona* and *Karna* but because he was sitting in that chariot, it did not disintegrate. That is the reason why he had asked *Arjuna* to alight first and with *Krishna* himself getting down from the chariot, it was reduced to ashes 'अस्त्रैर्बहुविधैर्दग्धः पूर्वमेवायमर्जुन | मदधिष्ठितत्वात्समरे न विशीर्णः परंतप || इदानीं तु विशीर्णोऽयं दग्धो ब्रह्मास्त्रतेजसा | मया विमुक्तः कौन्तेय त्वय्यद्य कृतकर्मणि ||'. Then as if to make them realize that it is not so much as the bravery of the *Pandavas* as it is the *divine intent* that has brought this success defeating his enemies, *Krishna* says - 'दिष्ट्या जयसि कौन्तेय दिष्ट्या ते शत्रवो जिताः | दिष्ट्या गाण्डीवधन्वा च भीमसेनश्च पाण्डव || त्वं चापि कुशली राजन्माद्रीपुत्रौ च

...ती | मुक्तावीरक्षयादस्मात् संग्रामन्निहताद्विषः ||' and sounds in celebration his conch followed by others, the sound ...verberating in the sky and shaking earth.

It is important testimony and testament for human beings how they are blessed in becoming the ...ssed instruments in fulfilling the divine intent and purpose, as eloquently mentioned in *upanishads* ... 'यन् वाचानभ्युदिन येन वागभ्युद्यते | . . यन्मनसा न मनुते येनाहुर मनो मतम् | . . यच्चक्षुषा न पश्यति येन चक्षूंषि पश्यति | . . यच्छ्रोत्रेण न श्रुणोति येन श्रोत्रमिदं ... . . यत्प्राणेन न प्राणिति येन प्राणः प्रणीयते | . . तदेव ब्रह्म त्व विद्धि नेद यदिदमुपासते ||'. The ignorant and the arrogant who is not ...scious of this eternal truth become obscure considering that he is the master of his soul and creator of ...destiny. *Krishna* is a great world teacher, who without speaking many words makes the meaning of ...nan existence clear and specific. *Krishna* is not far away from any one in creation it is the manifest ...ation which has distanced itself far away from *Krishna*. The Sun is not far away from anyone ...dding his luminous light and warmth one every one, the good and the bad, the righteous and the ...ighteous. It is the righteous one who becomes conscious of the luminous light and the wakes to revel ...he warmth, the unrighteous one being obscure in mind and heart shuts the luminous light from his ...ht pulling further the blanket over their eyes and becomes deprived of the warmth. Krishna is ever ...ir, shaking each one of us every moment sounding his conch reverberating in the sky and shaking ...th for every to wake up and be benefited from his luminous light lest we may relapse in obscurity and ...spondency.

Sanjaya narrating the events of *Duryodhana's* reports that even as he sank down on the ground ... was wringing his hands and grinding his teeth in despair, lamenting that in spite of so many brave ...rriors he is facing such gruesome death. *Duryodhana* even as waits for his death to come, points out ...*Sanjaya* the state to which inexorable *Time* has reduced him to be, in spite of *Bhishma*, *Drona*, *Karna*, ...*vatthama* and others on his side. He implores him to inform all who are still alive, how *Bhima* has ...led him un-righteously. People will surely lament seeing the battle won through deceit. Who indeed ...ould be happy having won the worlds through unrighteous deeds? Like *Bhima* no noble person would ...er revel in success, kicking him when he had fallen with his thigh shattered unrighteous by him, what ...ore degradation could there be for him? 'भीष्मे शान्तनवे नाथे कर्णे शस्त्रभृतां वरे || गौतमे शकुनौ तथा शल्ये शूरे च कृतवर्माणि || ...मवस्था प्राप्तोऽस्मि कालो हि दुरतिक्रमः | एकादशचमूभर्ता सोऽहमेतां दशां गतः || कालं प्राप्य महाबाहो न कश्चिदतिवर्तते | आख्यातव्यं मदीयानां ...ष्मिञ्जीवान्ति संयुगे || यथाहं भीमसेनेन व्युत्क्रम्य समयं हतः | इदं चाकीर्तिजं कर्म नृशंसैः पाण्डवैः कृतम् || येन ते सत्सु निर्वेदं गमिष्यन्ति हि मे मतिः | का प्रीतिः ...ग्युक्तस्य कृत्वोपधिकृतं जयम् || को वा समयभेत्तारं बुधः सम्मन्तुमर्हति | अधर्मेण जयं लब्ध्वा को नु हृष्येत पण्डितः || यथा संहृष्यते पापः पाण्डुपुत्रो वृकोदरः | किन्नु ...मितस्त्वद्य भग्नसक्थस्य यन्मम || क्रुद्धेन भीमसेनेन पादेन मृदितं शिरः |'.

One has been a ruler once, served by companions and wealth, even when he is dyeing should be ...nourably dealt. My parents would no doubt be eager to hear of his death, tell them he had performed ...any sacrifices, have supported the needy, and had served the lands well. He has stepped on the head of ...ven the enemies when they were alive, have given proper charity and have pleased friends, have given ...ains to enemies, who else could have done these? Who else could have been loved by brothers, ...spected by others and enjoyed righteousness, enterprise and desires, who else could have done these? ...e has conquered great kings, have received great respect and honours, have conquered other nations ...nd have been served by him and have always been well disposed to the dear ones, have studied ...criptures regularly, given charities and have lived life without any diseases, have won worlds fighting ...ith my righteous duty, course, has never been defeated in battles, nor have ever surrendered to ...nemies, have enjoyed wealth which by my death would be going to others. I have never been defeated ...or have run from the battle field he has indeed been killed by *Bhima* as one would kill a helpless man or ... sleeping person. They have broken the righteous rules of battles on many occasions 'मूर्ध्नि स्थितममित्राणां ...विनामेव संजय | दत्ता दाया यथाशक्ति मित्राणां च प्रियं कृतम् || अमित्रा बाधिताः सर्वे को नु स्वन्ततरो मया | मानिता बान्धवाः सर्वे वश्यः सम्पूजितो जनः || त्रितयं ...वितं सर्व को नु स्वन्ततरो मया |..यदिष्टं क्षत्रबन्धूनां स्वधर्ममनुतिष्ठताम् || निधनं तन्मया प्राप्तं को नु स्वन्ततरो मया | दिष्ट्या नाहं परावृत्तो वैरात् प्रकृतवर्जितः || ...दिष्ट्या न विमतिं कांचिद्भजित्वा तु पराजितः | सुप्तं वाथ प्रमत्तं वा यथा हन्याद्विषेण वा || एवं व्युत्क्रान्तधर्मेण व्युत्क्रम्य समयं हतः |..अधर्मेण प्रवृत्तानां

पाण्डवानामनेकेशः || विश्वासं समयघ्नानां न युयं गन्तुमहथ |'.. He indeed is like one who in a great journey has been separat from others. He regrets for the misery which his sister would be suffering the death of her husband a brothers, and also the misery of his parents who have lost all their dependents. Finally *Duryodha* hopes that if the eloquent *Charvaka* hears of his death he will surely take vengeance. As far as he concerned with his death in the holy *Syamnat Panchakam*, he will surely go to heavens'करिष्यति महाभागो : चापचितिं मम | समन्तपञ्चकं पुण्ये त्रिषु लोकेपु विश्रुते || अहं निधनमासाद्य लोकान्प्राप्स्यामि शाश्वतान्||'.

The long peroration of anguish may look as fruitless lamentation by a defeated and fall warrior. But an impassioned and fair person would not miss a streak of pride in self-righteous behavio of a persons, who by his own admission has not been able to do respond to the good and desist from t evil 'जानामि धर्म न च मे प्रवृत्तिः जानाम्यधर्म न च मे निवृत्तिः | केनापि देवेन हृदि स्थितेन यतहा नियुक्तो तथा करोमि ||' and yet was proud of h own ability and competence when he assured his father- 'समर्थं मन्यसे यच्च कुन्तिपुत्रं वृकोदरम्| तन्मिथ्या न हि मे कृत्स्नं पभावं वा भारत || मत्समो हि गदायुद्धे पृथिव्यां नास्ति कश्चन | नासीन्कश्चिदतिक्रान्तो भुवि ता न च कश्चन || युक्तो दुःखोपितश्चाहं विद्यापारगास्तथा | तस्मान्नन्येभ्यो भय विद्यते क्वचित्|| दुर्योधनसमो नास्ति गदायामिति निश्चयः | संकर्षणश्च भद्रं ते यत्तदैनमुपावमम्|| ... नाहं भवति न द्रोणे नाश्वत्थाम्नि न सञ्जये | न भीष्मे न च काम्ये न कृपे न व वाह्लिके || सत्यवते पुरुमित्रे भूरिश्रवसि वा पुनः | अन्येपु वा तावकेपु भारं कृत्वा समाह्यहम्||... अहं च तान कर्णश्च भ्राता दुःशासनश्च मे | एते : हनिष्यामः पाण्डवान्समरे त्रयः ||... यावुद्धि सप्यास्तीक्ष्णयाया विध्योगणेण मारिष | तावदप्यपरित्याज्यं भूमेर्नः पाण्डवान्प्रति ||'. Proud as a *Vrattr Shambara, Hiranyakashipu* or *Ravana* an anti-hero for the unenlightened forces, who were obscured the divine essence within them, he reflects his magnanimity demanding allegiance even from *Karn Ashavatthama, Kripa* or *Kritiverma*, who were at no stretch of imagination could be said to be less nobl and less righteous or obscure of *divine essence*.

Sanjaya when ends this report tells that listening to *Duryodhana's* profound protestation, tear well up in many eyes, even as spread in all the four quarters. Even the ocean became tempestuous, tree shook, earth trembled, animate and inanimate becomes disturbed and quarters became obscure 'न जनसहस्राणि वाष्पपूर्णानि मारिष || प्रालपं नृपतेः श्रुत्वा व्यद्रवन्त दिशो दश | ससागरवना घोरा पृथिवी सचराचरा || चचालाथ सनिर्हादा दिशश्चैवाविलाभवन्| When this was conveyed to *Ashvatthama* and the rest, who themselves were hurt, they soon came to th battle ground where they saw *Duryodhana* lying like a huge tree uprooted by a stormy winds, or like huge elephant struck by a hunter, or like Sun fallen by divine will, or like ocean dried by a tornado, o like moon obscured my smog waiting for his death 'तत्रापश्यन्महात्मानं धार्तराष्ट्रान्निपातितम्| प्रभग्नं वायुवेगेन महाशालं यथा वने ..महागजमिवारण्ये व्याधेन विनिपातितम्| यदृच्छया निपतितं चक्रमादित्यगोचरम्| महावातसमुत्थेन संशुष्कमिव सागरम्| पूर्णचन्द्रमिव व्योम्नि तुषारावृतमण्डलम्|'.

They lament that nothing in the world is eternal, every thing being fleeting and transitory where even a king would roll in dust - 'न नूनं विद्यते सत्यं मानुषे किंचिदेव हि | यत्र त्वं पुरुषव्याघ्र शेषे पांसुषु रूपितः || भूत्वा हि नृपतिः पू समाज्ञाप्य च मेदिनीम्| कथमेकोऽद्य राजेन्द्र तिष्ठसे निर्जने वने ||..दुःखं नूनं कृतान्तस्य गतिं ज्ञातुं कथंचन | लोकाना च भवानत्र शेषे पांसुषु रूपितः ||' Hearing these words, *Duryodhana's* eyes welled up moist with tears. Wiping them, he consoled then that what was ordained that has happened, death being inevitable for all creatures. One who was a ruler of the worlds is now reduced to such state. It is by good fortune that friends like them are saved which makes him happy. Though it is natural, they should not succumb to sorrow. Even though he accepts *Krishna's* transcendent power he was not inclined to accept क्षत्रधर्म as recommended by him. He has followed क्षत्रधर्म as he understood it, therefore, it is not proper for them to grieve. Saying thus with tears in his eyes he lapsed in silence with extreme pain 'ईदृशो लोकधर्मोऽयं धात्रा निर्दिष्ट उच्यते | विनाशः सर्वभूतानां कालपर्यायमागतः | सोऽयं मां समनुप्राप्तः प्रत्यक्षं भवतां हि यः | पृथिवीं पालयित्वाहमेतां निष्ठामुपागतः || दिष्ट्या नाहं परावृत्तो युद्धे कस्यांचिदापदि | दिष्ट्याहं निहतः पापैश्छलेनैव विशेषतः || दिष्ट्या च योऽहं पश्यामि मुक्तानस्माज्जनक्षयात्| स्वस्तियुक्तांश्च कल्यांश्च तन्मे प्रियमनुत्तमम्|.. मन्यमानः प्रभावं च कृष्णस्यामिततेजसः | तेन न च्यावितश्चाहं क्षत्रधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात्|| स मया समनुप्राप्तो नास्मि शोच्यः कथंचन | एतावदुक्त्वा वचनं वाष्पव्याकुललोचनः || तूष्णीं बभूव राजेन्द्र रुजार्तो विह्वलो भृशम्||'.

Seeing the tears in *Duryodhana's* eyes, *Ashvatthama* became angry like the fire that destroys the worlds at the end of the *yuga*. The wringing his hands and with tears in his eyes he addressed these words to the fallen warrior, that *Pandavas* had killed his father in deceitful manner even as he sees *Duryodhana* struck down. Therefore, he vows by all charities, righteousness and good deeds performed

him, that he will destroy all *Panchalas* even as *Krishna* saw *Kauravas* killed - 'श्रुणु मे वचो मह्यं सत्येन वदतः || इष्टापूर्तेन दानेन धर्मेण सुकृतेन च | अद्याहं सर्वपञ्चालान्वासुदेवस्य पश्यतः || सर्वापार्यैर्हि नेष्यामि प्रेतराजनिवेशनम्| अनुज्ञां तु महागज भवान्मे र्हसि ||'.An extremely pleased *Duryodhana* asks *Kripacharya* to bring water and consecrates *vvatthama* to fulfill his objective. Thereafter they all leave his presence and depart.

Here in *Hastinapura*, *Dhritarashtra* continues to lament saying that his son was young and ong and yet came to be killed, proving if any thing the inevitability of *the divine will.* How can he, an man now stay in *Yudhishthira* kingdom after his son's death ? How can he having ruled as King and father of King live under some one else's dominion? How can he remain under *Bhima* who has been cause of the death of his hundred sons? Having rejected all his advise, his son has proved *Vidura* ht in all his words 'अवध्यः सर्वभूतानां वज्रसंहननो युवा | पाण्डवैः समरे पुत्रो निहतो मम संजय || न दिष्टमभ्यातिकान्तुं शक्यं गाल्वणे नरैः | यत्समेत्य पार्थैः पुत्रो मम निपातितः || कथं हि वृद्धमिथुनं हतपुत्रं भविष्यति | न ह्यहं पाण्डवेस्य विषये वस्तुमुत्सहे || कथं राज्ञः पिता भूत्वा स्वयं राजा च संजय | प्रेष्यभूतः यं पाण्डवेयस्य शासनम्|| कथं भीमस्य वाक्यानि श्रोतुं शक्ष्यामि संजय | येन पुत्रशतं पूर्णमेकेन निहतं मम || कृतं सत्यं वचस्तस्य विदुरस्य महात्मनः | अकुर्वता नेन मम पुत्रेण संजय ||'. He laments telling *Sanjaya*, that even though his son had strength of ten thousand phants he was defeated by *Bhima*, Seeing that he was made to die on the battle filed, one feels that a man being cannot avoid the divine will. Surely his heart has become like stone that it has not broken in ndred pieces even after hearing the death of the hundred sons. Alas, how can they, now two old rsons can hope to live like servants under *Yudhsishthira's* rule. Having ruled the whole world how can ey serve under other's domination. How can he remain alive to listen to *Bhima's* cruel words 'अश्रद्धेयमिदं कृतं भीमेन संजय | यत्स नागायुतप्राणः पुत्रो मम निपातितः || ... अद्रिसारमयं नूनं हृदयं मम संजय | हतं पुत्रशतं श्रुत्वा यन्न दीर्णं सहस्रधा || कथं हि वृद्धमिथुनं पुत्रं भविष्यति | न ह्यहं पाण्डवेस्य विषये वस्तुमुत्सहे || कथं राज्ञः पिता भूत्वा स्वयं राज च संजय | प्रेष्यभूतः प्रवर्तेयं पाण्डवेयस्य शासनात्||..कथं भीमस्य वाक्यानि तुं शक्ष्यामि संजय | येन पुत्रशतं पूर्णमेकेन निहतं मम ||'.

When the proper time comes *Yudhishthira* decides to go and meet *Dhritarashtra* and *Gandhari* हतं दुर्योधनं दृष्ट्वा भीमसेनेन संयुगे | व्युत्क्रम्य समयं राजन्धार्तराष्ट्रं महाबलम्|| अन्यायेन हतं दृष्ट्वा गदायुद्धेन भारत | युधिष्ठिरं महाराज महद् भयमथाविशत्|| ध्यानो महाभागां गान्धारीं तपसान्विताम्| घोरेण तपसा युक्तां त्रैलोक्यामपि सा दहेत्||..गान्धार्याः कोधदीप्तायाः पूर्वं प्रशमनं भवेत्|| सा हि पुत्रवधं श्रुत्वा तमस्माभिरीदृशम्| मानसेनाग्निना कुद्धा भस्मसान्नः करिष्यति || कथं दुःखमिदं तीव्रं गान्धारी सा सहिष्यति | श्रुत्वा विनिहतं पुत्रं छलेनाजिह्मयोधिनम्||'. He was concerned hearing the words spoken that unrighteous methods were used by him and the manner of *Duryodhana's* death he expresses his anxiety to *Krishna* and asks him to accompany him, where even *Vyasa* would also be there - 'युधिष्ठिरस्ततो राज प्राप्तकालचिन्तयत्| तत्र ने गमनं प्राप्तं रोचते तव माधव || गान्धार्याः कोधदीप्तायाः प्रशमार्थमरिंदम | नुकारणयुक्तैश्च वाक्यैः कालसमीरितैः || क्षिप्रमेव महाभाग गान्धारीं प्रशमिश्यसि | पितामहश्च भगवान्व्यासस्तत्र भविष्यति ||'. Till that moment *Krishna's* grace alone has safeguarded them from difficulties and has won them kingdom. He has helped them in destroying *Kauaravas* even as he had helped gods earlier in their battle with *asuras*, becoming *Arjuna's* charioteer. Now he fears *Gandhari's* anger seeing her all sons killed. Krishna is creator and the destroyer, therefore, he alone would be able to console her - 'तव प्रसादात्गोविन्द राज्यं निहतकण्टकम्| अप्राप्यं मनसापीदं प्राप्तमस्माभिरच्युत || प्रत्यक्षं मे महाबाहो संग्रामे लोमहर्षणे | विमर्दः सुमहान्प्राप्तस्त्वया यादवनन्दन || त्वया देवासुरे युद्धे वधार्थमसुरद्विषाम्| यथा साह्यं पुरा दत्तं नाश्च विबुधद्विषः || साह्यं तथा महाबाहो दत्तामस्माकमच्युत | सारथ्येन च वार्ष्णेय भवता हि धृता वयम्|| यदि न त्वं भवेर्नाथः फाल्गुनस्य महारणे | कथं शक्यो रणे तुं भवेदेष बलार्णव ||..संदेहदोलां प्राप्तं नश्चेनः कृष्ण जये सति | गान्धार्या हि महाबाहो कोधं बुद्धयस्व माधव || सा हि नित्यं महाभागा तपसोग्रेण कर्शिता | पुत्रपौत्रवधं श्रुत्वा धुवं नः सम्प्रधक्ष्यति || तस्याः प्रसादनं वीर प्राप्तकालं मतं मम | कश्च तां कोधताम्राक्षीं पुत्रव्यसनकर्शिताम्|| वीक्षितुं पुरुषः शक्तस्त्वामृते पुरुषोत्तम | तत्र मे गमनं प्राप्तं रोचते तव माधव || गान्धार्याः कोधदीप्तायाः प्रशमार्थमरिंदम | त्वं हि कर्ता विकर्ता च लोकानां प्रभवाप्ययः || हेतुकारणसंयुक्तैर्वाक्यैः कालसमीरितैः | क्षिप्रमेव महाबाहो गान्धारीं शमयिष्यसि ||'.

Krishna agrees and goes with him to *Hastinapur* where he finds *Vyasa* with *Dhritarashtra* and *Gandhari*. Offering obeisance to them, he takes *Dhritarashtra's* hands in his own and sorrows deeply about the calamity which has come over them, saying that it is difficult to speak to one who is old, though he knows that whatever is destined to happen will surely happen. He assures him that Pandavas had tried everything so that the family would not be exterminated. Even he himself had tried to bring conciliation but had no success. But obscured by efflux of *Time*, every one comes under delusion 'पूर्वं वाभिगतं तत्र सोऽपश्यदृषिसत्तमम्| पादौ प्रपीड्य कृष्णस्य राज्ञश्चापि जनार्दनः || अभ्यवादयदव्यग्रो गान्धारीं चापि केशवः | ततस्तु यादवश्रेष्ठो धृतराष्टमधोक्षजः ||

प्रणिमालम्ब्य राजेन्द्र सुस्वरं प्ररुरोद ह |..न तेऽस्त्यविदितं किंचिद्वृद्धस्य तव भारत | कालस्य च यथावृत्तं तत्ते सुविदितं प्रभो || यतितं पाण्डवैः सर्वैः चित्तानुरोधिभिः | कथं कुलक्षयो न स्यात्तथाक्षत्रस्य भारत ||..मया च स्वयमागम्य युद्धकाल उपस्थितं | सर्वलोकस्य सांनिध्ये ग्रामांस्त्वं प याचितः ||..कालोपहतचित्ता हि सर्वे मुह्यन्ति भारत || यथा मूढो भवान पूर्वामस्मिन्नर्थे समुद्यते | किमन्यत्कालयोगाद्धि दिष्टमेव परायणम्||'. Therefore, would not be proper for *Dhritarashtra* and *Gandhari* to bear any grudge against *Pandavas*, since on, they are now left among *Kurus* who could offer oblation to you 'मा च दोशानमहाप्राज्ञ पाण्डवेषु निवेशय ऽ अल्पोऽप्यतिक्र नास्ति पाण्डवानां महात्मानाम्|| धर्मतो न्यायतश्चैव स्नेहाश्च परंतप | एतत्सर्वं तु विज्ञाय ह्यात्मदोषायकृतं फलम्|| असूयां पाण्डुपुत्रेषु न भावान् कर्तुमर्हति |..अ वंशश्च पिण्डाश्च यच्च पुत्रकृतं फलम्|| गान्धार्यास्तव वै नाथ पाण्डवेषु प्रतिष्ठितम्|'.

They both know how much *Yudhishthira* respects them, therefore fearing their anger an displeasure he is hesitant to come in his presence 'जानासि च महाबाहो धर्मराजस्य या त्वयि || भक्तिर्भरतशार्दूल स्नेहश्चा स्वभावतः |..पुत्रशोकाभिसंतप्तं बुद्धिव्याकुलितेन्द्रियम्|'. Then turning to *Gandhari*, *Krishna* lauds her penance an austerities and also the advice which she had given from time to time to *Duryodhana* saying tha wherever there is righteous, they will surely 0be victory. Though he did not accept her advice, her word have turned true today. Therefore, she should bear any grudge against *Pandavas* - 'त्वत्समा नास्ति लोकेऽस्मिन् सीमन्तिनी शुभे | जानासि च यथा राज्ञी सभायां मससंनिधौ || धर्मार्थसहितं वाक्यमुभयोः पक्षयोर्हितम्| उक्तवत्यसि कल्याणि न च ते तनयैः कृतम्|| दुर्योधनस्त्वया वान जयार्थि परुषं वचः | श्रुणु मूढो वचो मह्यं यतो धर्मस्ततो जयः ||..पाण्डवानां विनाशाय मा ते बुद्धिः कदाचन | शक्ता चासि महाभागे पृथिवीं सचराचरम्| चक्षु क्रोधदीप्तेन निर्दग्धुं तपसा बलात्|'. *Gandhari* concedes that her mind was temporarily unsettled due to grief, bu now listening to his words she is now composed 'वासुदेवस्य वचः श्रुत्वा गान्धारी वाक्यमब्रवीत्|| एवमेतन्महाबाहो यथा वदसि केशव आधिभिर्दह्यमानाया मतिः संचलिता मम || सा मे व्यवस्थिता श्रुत्वा तव वाक्यं जनार्दन |'.

Then even as they were conversing, *Krishna* suddenly rises from his seat, telling them that h perceives in his *supra-sensory Consciousness*, that *Ashvatthama* was contemplating to kill *Draupadi'* children in their sleep. Excusing himself from their company he rushes to *Pandava's* camp, even a *Dhritarashtra* and *Gandhari* as ones concerned in saving the last vestige of *Kuru* clan, to hasten an save the children 'समाश्वास्य च गान्धारीं धृतराष्ट्रं च माधवः || द्रौणिसंकल्पितं भावमवबुद्ध्यत केशवः | ततस्त्वरित उत्थाय पादौ मूर्ध्ना प्रणम्य च ..आपृच्छे त्वां कुरुश्रेष्ठ मा च शोके मनः कृथाः || द्रौणेः पापोऽस्त्यभिप्रायस्तेनास्मि सहसोत्थितः | पाण्डवाना वधे रात्रौ बुद्धिस्तेन प्रदर्शिता || एतच्छ्रुत्वा तु वच गान्धार्या सहितोऽब्रवीत्| धृतराष्ट्रो महाबाहुः केशवं केशिसूदनम्|| शीघ्रं गच्छ महाबाहो पाण्डवान्परिपालय | भूयस्त्वया समेष्यामि क्षिप्रमेव जनार्दन ||'.

When *Ashvattama*, *Kripacharya* and *Kritavarma* left *Duryodhana*, they direct their attention to Pandava's camp resting on the way under a tree to avoid being detected. Of all the three, *Ashvatthama* remains restless and agitated, reflecting on the future course to be adopted. While lying on his back, he sees crows sleeping on the tree, when an owl swoops down on them killing few of them. He reflects that the same course can be used to swoop on the unsuspecting dwellers in *Pandava's* camp to kill them all. Then remembering that it would be difficult to succeed if he fights in righteous manner, he justifies deception as the only preferred course in such extreme case, even as *Pandavas* having used such course - 'राज्ञः सकाशात्तेषां तु प्रतिज्ञातो वधो मया || पतङ्गाग्निसमां वृत्तिमास्थायात्मविनाशिनीम्| न्यायतो युध्यमानस्य प्राणत्यागो न संशयः || छद्मना च भवेत्सिद्धि शत्रूणां च क्षयो महान्| तत्र संशयितादर्थाद् योऽर्थो निःसंशयो भवेत्|| तं जना बहु मन्यन्ते ये शास्त्रविशारदाः | यच्चाप्यत्र भवेद्वाच्यं गर्हितं लोकनिन्दितम्|| कर्तव्य तन्मुष्येण क्षत्रधर्मेण वर्तता | निन्दितानि सर्वाणि कुत्सितानि पदे पदे || सोपधानि कृतान्येव पाण्डवैरकृतात्मभिः |'. He recalls an ancient saying, which justified when an enemy is tired and scattered or taking food it should be challenged even when sleeping at night or has become weak, when their leader is dead and there is breach 'अस्मिन्नर्थे पुरा गीता श्रूयन्ते धर्म चिन्तकैः || श्लोका न्यायमवेक्षद्भिस्तत्त्वार्थास्तत्त्वदर्शिभिः | परिश्रान्ते विदीर्णे वा भुञ्जाने वापि शत्रुभिः || प्रस्थाने वा प्रवेशे वा प्रहर्तव्यं रिपोर्बलम्| निद्रार्तमर्धरात्रे च तथा नष्टप्रणायकम्|| भिन्नयोधं बलं यच्च द्विधा युक्तं च यद्भवेत्| इत्येव निश्चय चक्रे सुप्तानां निशि मारणे ||'.

Subsequent morning when he communicates his plan to *Kripa* and *Kritavarma*, they are shocked lapsing in silence listening to devious plan. They tell him that one should accept that *Duryodhana* was driven by greed and had not listened to the advice of his elders or even from them. But *Ashvatthama* was not convinced saying that even though born in a *Brahmin* family he is inclined to be vengeful like *Kshatriya* सोऽस्मि जातः कुले श्रेष्ठे ब्राह्मणानां सुपूजिते | मन्दभाग्यतयास्म्येय क्षत्रधर्मनुष्ठितः ||. Therefore, if he does not perform actions avenging the death of his father and friend, then it would be wrong, 'सोऽहमद्य यथाकामं क्षत्रधर्म आसुपास्य ताम्| गन्तास्मि पदवीं राज्ञः पितुश्चापि महात्मनः ||', even as killing *Panchalas* would satisfy 'अद्य पाञ्चालसेनां तां निहत्य निशि

ınके | कृतकृत्यः सुप्री चैव भाविष्यामि महामते ||' Seeing *Ashvattahma* determination, *Kripa* tells him to reconsider his cision but *Ashvtthama* vehemently tells him that he can sleep only when the enemies are killed.

As *Ashvatthama* approaches *Panchala's* camp, he observes a strange creature wearing a tiger-in and a snake for sacred thread, holding in his uplifted arm with weapon ready to strike with mouth d thousand eyes spewing fire. Hundreds and thousands *Vishnus* were seen emerging from his eyes, se and ear. But without any trace of fright, *Ashvatthama* discharged powerful arrows on that creature, th no effect. Considering withdrawal as unbecoming for him, he prayed *Rudra* for his grace and idance, whereupon the creature becomes calm and identifies itself as *Rudra, Krishna* being no one her than his own *self*, performing actions to fulfill the *divine intent* and *purpose*. Then seeing the time s come for *Panchalas* to die, *Rudra* enters *Ashvatthama's* body making it resplendent and well uipped for the task 'मत्यशौचार्जवत्यागैस्नपमा नियमेन च | क्षान्त्या भक्त्या च धृत्या च वुद्ध्या च वचमा तथा || यथावदहमागद्धः कृष्णेनाक्लिष्टकर्मणा स्मादिष्टनमः कृष्णादन्यो मम न विद्यते || कुर्वता सम्मानं त्वां च जिज्ञासता मया | पञ्चालाः महसा गुप्ता मायाश्च वहुशः कृताः || कृनस्तस्यैव मम्मानः वालानरक्षना मया | अभिभूतास्तु कालेन नैषामद्यास्ति जीवितम्|| एवमुक्त्वा महात्मनं भगवनात्मनस्तनुम्| आविवेश ददौ चास्मै विमलं खड्गमुत्तमम्|| अथाविष्टो वता भूयो जज्वाल तेजसा | वेगवांश्चाभवद्युद्धे देवसृष्टेन तेजसा || तमदृश्यानि भूतानि रक्षांसि च समाद्रवन्| अभितः शत्रुशिविरं यान्तं सक्षादिदंवेश्वरम्||'.

Ashvatthama enters *Panchala's* camp along with *Kripa* and *Kritavarma*, to destroy them like ल, *Time* having no escape 'अहं पवंक्ष्ये शिविरं चारिष्यामि च कालवत्| यथा न कश्चिदपि वा जीवन्मुच्येत मानवः || तथा भवद्भ्यां कार्यं स्यादिति मे श्चिना मतिः |'. He wakes up *Drishtadhyumna* from his sleep shaking him with his leg. Recognizing *shvatthama*, the *Panchala* ruler attempts to rise, but is pinned down his face rubbing it on the ground nd pressing his chest and throat with feet. *Drishtadhyumna* pleads him to put him to death immediately ut *Ashvatthama* was in no such mood, saying he does not deserve a death like a *Kshatriya* having killed oble *Drona*. He hits and shatters him killing him in the process. Then he kills *Uttamauja* also like wise long with *Yudhamanyu* and other warriors. Completely drenched in blood, *Ashvatthama* he transfers is attention to *Somakas* and *Draupadi's* five sons and kills them all, thus destroying the last vestige of he *Pandavas*. When *Dhritarashtra* asks if *Ashvatthama* was so determined to help *Duryodhana* why lid he not kill *Panchalas* and *Draupadi's* children earlier. *Sanjaya* replies that *Ashvatthama* was afraid f *Krishna*, *Satyaki* and *Pandavas* and only in their absence he found courage to kill them in their sleep तषा नून भयान्नासौ कृतवान्कुरुनन्दन | असांनिध्याद्धि पार्थानां केशवस्य च धीमनः || सात्यकेश्चापि कर्मेदं द्रोणपुत्रेण साधिनाम्|'.

After the foul deed was done the three warriors rush to inform their success to *Duryodhana* if e was still alive, 'ततो जनक्षयं कृत्वा पाण्डवानां महात्ययम्|| दिष्ट्या दिष्ट्येव चान्योन्यं समेत्योचुर्महारथाः | पर्यष्वजत्ततो द्रौणिस्ताभ्यां म्प्रतिनन्दितः|| इदं हर्षात् तु सुमहदाददे वाक्यमनुत्तमम्| पञ्चाला निहताः सर्वे द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्वशः || सोमका मत्स्यशेषाश्च सर्वे विनिहता मया | इदानीं कृतकृत्याः स्म याम तत्रैव मा चिरम्| यदि जीवति नो राजा तस्मै शंसमहे वयम् ||'. When they arrive, they see him still alive with thighs broken and blood oozing from his mouth. Birds of prey were hovering around him and he was warding them off with difficulty, a sight pitiable for any one to see 'ते हत्वा सर्वपञ्चालान्द्रौपदेयांश्च सर्वशः | आगच्छन्सहितास्तत्र यत्र दुर्योधनो हतः ||..तं भग्नसक्थं राजेन्द कृच्छ्रप्राणमचेतसम्| वमन्तं रुधिरं वक्त्रादपश्यन्वसुधातले || वृत्तं समन्ताद्बहुभिः श्वापदैर्घोरदर्शनैः | शालावृकगणैश्चैव भक्षयिष्यद्भिरन्तिकात्||. They gather around him and grieve that he with renown as great warrior and favorite of his teacher *Balarama* should die in such manner. Indeed *Time's* course is difficult to be foreseen that he who fought with righteousness should be kicked on head unrighteously. Fie on *Krishna* fie on *Yudhishthira* for disregarding this transgression 'कालो नूनं महाराज लोकेऽस्मिन्बलवंत्तरः | पश्यामो निहतं त्वां च भीमसेनेन संयुगे || कथं त्वा सर्वधर्मज्ञं क्षुद्रः पापो वृकोदरः | निकृत्या हतवान्मन्दो नूनं कालो दुरत्ययः || अधर्मेण हतस्याजौ मृद्यमानं पदा शिरः | य उपेक्षितवान्क्षुद्रं हि कृष्णं धिग्युधिष्ठिरम्||'

Ashvatthama then informs *Duryodhana* that he does not regret his death as much as his old parents living hereafter. He commends *Duryodhana* for having fallen fighting in righteous manner but wonders how with all their sons dead his old parents would spend rest of their lives. 'दुर्योधन न शोचामि त्वामहं पुरुषर्षभ | हतपुत्रौ नु शोचामि गान्धारीं पितरं च ते ||..धिगस्तु कृष्णं वार्ष्णेयमर्जुनं चापि दुर्मतीम्|| धर्मज्ञमानिनौ यौ त्वां वध्यमानमुपेक्षताम्|..धन्यस्त्वमसि गान्धारे यस्त्वमायोधने हतः || प्रायशोऽभिमुखः शत्रून्धर्मेण पुरुषर्षभ | हतपुत्रा हि गान्धारी निहतज्ञातिबान्धवा || प्रज्ञाचक्षुश्च दुर्धर्षः कां गतिं प्रतिपास्यते |'.

Then addressing *Duryodhana* again *Ashvatthama* says that if he has his life still left then listen

to these pleasing words, that *Draupadi's* all five children are dead even as *Drishtadhyumna*, see how he has taken vengeance he tells that no one other than the five *Pandavas* are alive, he having killed all the rest -'दुर्योधन जीवसि त्वं वाक्यं श्रोत्रसुखं श्रुणु | सप्त पाण्डवतः शेषा धार्तराष्ट्रास्त्रयो वयम्||..कृते प्रतिकृतं पश्य हतपुत्रा हि पाण्डवाः | सौप्तिके शिबिरं तेषां हतं सनरवाहनम्|| मया च पापकर्मासौ धृष्टद्युम्नो महीपते | प्रविश्य शिबिरं रात्रौ पशुमारेण मारितः ||. Listening to these words *Duryodhana*, slowly opens his eyes and replies that the three of them have done for him what even *Bhishma, Karna* and *Drona* could not accomplish. He embraces them wishing them well and to live till they all meet again in heaven - 'दुर्योधनस्तु तां वाचं निशम्य मनसः प्रियाम्| प्रतिलभ्य पुनश्चेत इदं वचनमब्रवीत्|| न मेऽकरोत्तद्गाङ्गेयो न कर्णो न च ते पिता | यत्त्वया कृपभोजाभ्यां सहितेनाद्य मे कृतम्|| स च सेनापतिः क्षुद्रो हतः सार्धं शिखंडिना | तेन मन्ये मघवता सममात्मानमद्य वै || स्वस्ति प्राप्नुत भद्रं वः स्वर्गे नः संगमः पुनः | इत्येवमुक्त्वा तूष्णिं स कुरुराजो महामनाः || प्राणानुपासृजद् वीरः सुहृदां दुःखमुत्सृजन्| अपाक्रामद्दिवं पुण्यां शरीरं क्षितिमाविशत्||'. Then *Duryodhana* lapses in silence and gives up his life. Seeing him dead, they leave him with sad countenance 'तथैव ते परिष्वक्ताः परिष्वज्य च ते नृपम्| पुनः पुनः प्रेक्षमाणाः स्वकानारुरुह रथान्||'.

After *Panchalas* and *Draupdi's* sons are killed, *Drishtadhyumna's* charioteer goes and reports the events to *Yudhishthira,* who falls in deep sorrow exclaiming that it is indeed difficult even for one with divine sight to know how one's enterprise would take its turn. Others seem to live even in their defeat while they seem to have died even after their success. They had won the worlds defeating brothers, fathers, sons and companions but now seem to have indeed defeated by enemies. Some time it appears absence of any enterprise itself appears as meritorious enterprise and meritorious enterprise becomes fruitless enterprise. If an evil persons has to suffer after successful enterprise, then how can be call such end a successful enterprise ? If one has to destroy all ones' companions then they may for once revel in their success but in the end they had to be doubly careful from the defeated enemies - 'तच्छ्रुत्वा वाक्यमशिवं कुन्तीपुत्रो युधिष्ठिरः | पपात मह्यां दुर्धर्षः पुत्रशोकसमन्वितः ||..लब्धचेतास्तु कौन्तेयः शोकविह्वलया गिरा | जित्वा शत्रूञ्जितः पश्चात्पर्यदेवयदार्तवत्|| दुर्विदा गतिरर्थानामपि ये दिव्यचक्षुषः | जीयमाना जयन्त्यन्ये जयमाना वयं जिताः || हत्वा भ्रातृन्वयस्यांश्च पितृन्पुत्रान्सुहृद्गणान्| बन्धूनमात्यान्पौत्रांश्च जित्वा सर्वाञ्जिता वयम्|| अनर्थो ह्यर्थसंकाशस्तथानर्थोऽर्थदर्शनः | जयोऽयमजयाकारो जयस्तस्मात्पराजयः || यज्जित्वा तप्यते पश्चादापन्न इव दुर्मतिः | कथं मन्येत विजयं ततो जिततरः परैः ||..न हि प्रमादात्परमस्ति कश्चिद्वधो नराणामिह जीवलोके | प्रमत्तमर्था हि नरं समन्तात् त्यजन्त्यनर्थाश्च समाविशन्ति || न हि प्रमत्तेन नरेण लभ्या विद्या तपः श्रीर्विपुलं यशो वा | पश्यप्रमादेन निहत्य शत्रून्सर्वान्महेन्द्रं सुखमेधमानम्||'. *Yudhsishthira* was in a great quandary. Having killed friends and relatives he himself feels defeated, oftentimes misfortune appearing like good fortune and good fortune turning out to be misfortune. In each he finds seeds of defeat and discontent seem to be sown. Indeed there could be no greater adversity than death but to live with no friends and relatives is far worse than death.

Time seems to be testing *Yudhishthira's* धर्म. Soon *Nakula,* whose sons were also killed in the battle, comes to him with *Draupadi* who was mourning her dead sons. Seeing *Yudhishthira, Draupadi* pointedly remonstrates him that following क्षत्रधर्म, he seems to have won the world offering her sons as oblation to *Yama,* not even holding evil minded *Ashavatthama* responsible for slaughtering her children. Therefore, unless he is killed, she too will give up her life 'रुदती पाण्डवं कृष्णा सा हि भारतमब्रवीत्|| दिष्ट्या राजन्नवाप्येमामखिलां भोक्ष्यसे महीम्| आत्मजान्क्षत्रधर्मेण सम्प्रदाय यमाय वै || दिष्ट्या त्व कुशली पार्थ मत्तमातङ्गगामिनीम्| अवाप्य पृथिवी कृत्स्नां सौभद्रं न स्मरिष्यसि || आत्मजान्क्षत्रधर्मेण श्रुत्वा शूरान्निपातितान्| उपप्लव्ये मया सार्धं दिष्ट्या त्वं न स्मरिष्यसि ||..तस्य पापकृतो द्रौणेर्न चेदद्य त्वया रणे | ह्रीयते सानुबन्धस्य युधि विक्रम्य जीवितम्|| इहैव प्रायमासिष्ये तन्निबोध पाण्डवाः | न चेत्फलमवाप्नोति द्रौणिः पापस्य कर्मणः ||'.

Yudhishthira had no words of comfort except say that it was *divine Will* that her sons and brothers have attained heavens. The perpetrators of the crime who are hiding in the forest are as good as dead. But *Drauapdi* refuses to be consoled saying that she will have peace only when the gem imbedded on *Ashnatthama's* forehead is brought to her. Then turning to *Bhima,* who always has always come to her assistance, she tells him to fulfill her wish as *Kshatriya* 'धर्म्यं धर्मेण धर्मज्ञ प्राप्तास्ते निधनं शुभे | पुत्रास्ते भ्रातरश्चैव तान्न शोचितुमर्हसि || स कल्याणि वनं दुर्गमं दूरं द्रौणिरितो गतः | तस्य त्वं पातनं संख्ये कथं ज्ञास्यसि शोभने || द्रोणपुत्रस्य सहजो मणिः शिरसि मे श्रुतः | निहत्य संख्ये तं पापं पश्येयं मणिमाहृतम्|| राजञ्शिरसि तं कृत्वा जीवेयमिति मे मतिः |'.

Bhima proceeds angrily accompanied by *Nakula* to kill *Ashvatthama*, seeing which *Yudhishthira* reminds him that *Ashvatthama* possesses powerful *Brahamshira,* given to him by *Drona.*

ishna informs that *Ashvatthama* had once asked him to part with his discus, but since he was not able lift it, he was told that neither *Balarama*, *Arjuna* nor even his own son *Pradyumna* had ever asked for weapons, which like a fool he did. When asked the reason for such request, *Krishna* was surprised at it was to fight him and become himself invincible, because having already in possession the *ahamshira* weapon he need not fear any one else in the three worlds 'यत्तदुग्रं तपः कृष्ण चरन्सत्यपराक्रमः | स्त्यादभारताचार्यः प्रत्यपद्यत मे पिता || अस्त्रं ब्रह्मशिरो नाम देवगन्धर्वपूजितम्| तदद्य मयि दाशार्ह यथा पितरि मे तथा || अस्मत्तस्तदुपादाय दिव्यमस्त्रं यदुत्तम | यस्त्रं प्रयच्छ त्वं चक्रं रिपुहणं रणे ||.. गृहाण चक्रमित्युक्तो मया तु तदनन्तरम्| जग्राहोत्पत्य सहसा चक्रं सवयेन पाणिना || न चैनमशकन्स्थानात्संचालयितुमप्युत युहय भवतो पूजां यांत्स्ये कृष्ण त्वया सह || प्रार्थितं ते मया चक्रं देवदानवपूजितम्| अजेयः स्यामिति विभो सत्यमेतद्ब्रवीमि ते ||'.

Therefore, *Krishna* along with *Satyaki*, *Yudhishthira* and *Arjuna* decide to go where *hvatthama* would be challenged. They see *Ashvatthama* sitting on the banks of *Ganga* in the mpany of *Vyasa* and other sages. Seeing *Bhima* and other *Pandavas* approaching him along with *rishna*, *Ashvatthama* becomes scared and shoots Brahamshira weapon on them. As suggested by *rishna*, *Arjuna* neutralizes that weapon and weakens its impact 'अर्जुनार्जुन यद्दिव्यमस्त्रं ते हृदि वर्तते | द्रोणोपदिष्टं तस्यायं लः सम्पी पाण्डव ||'. When *Vyasa* and *Narada* observe that they have been using the powerful weapon with omplete disregard of the welfare of the people, they position themselves in between the two warriors 'ते स्त्रतेजसी लोकांस्तापयन्तौ व्यवस्थिते | महर्षी सहितौ तत्र दर्शयामासतुस्तदा || नारदः सर्वभूतात्मा भरतानां पितामहः | उभौ शमयितुं वीरौ भारद्वाजधनंजयौ || तौ तो सर्वधर्मज्ञौ सर्वभूतहितैषिणौ | दीप्तयोरस्त्रयोर्मध्ये स्थितौ परमतेजसौ ||'. *Vyasa* counsels *Ashvatthama* that *Arjuna* is equally apable to use the weapon, therefore, for the good of the people, each of them should withdraw their weapons.

Respecting their advise *Arjuna* withdraws his weapon, - 'उवाच भरतश्रेष्ठ तावृषी प्राञ्जलिस्तदा | प्रमुक्तमस्त्रमस्त्रेण शाम्यतामिति वै मया || संहृते परमास्त्रेऽस्मिन्सर्वानस्मानशेषतः | प्रदहेद् ध्रुवं द्रौणिः प्रधक्ष्यत्यस्त्रतेजसा ||' but *Ashvatthama* was not able to withdraw and becomes ashamed. He admits that he thought of using it out of fear of *Bhima* but having drawn the weapon, he finds himself unable to withdraw, perhaps having committed great indiscretion द्रौणिरप्यथ सम्प्रेक्ष्य तावृषी पुरतः स्थितौ | न शशाक पुनर्घोरमस्त्रं संहर्तुमोजसा || अशक्तः प्रतिसंहारे परमास्त्रस्य संयुगे | द्रौणीर्दीनमना राजन्द्वैपायनमभाषत || त्तमव्यसनार्तेन प्राणत्राणमभीप्सुना | मयैतदस्त्रमुत्सृष्टं भीमसेनाभयान्मुने || अधर्मेण कृतोऽनेन धार्तराष्ट्रं जिघांसता | मिथ्याचारेण भगवन् भीमसेनेन संयुगे || कृतं पिमदं ब्रह्मन्रोषाविष्टेन चेतसा | वधमाशास्य पार्थानां मयास्त्रं सृजता रणे ||'.

Vyasa tells *Ashvatthama* that if *Brahmshira* weapon is humiliated and used improperly, then rains will not fall on the earth. Therefore, he should withdraw in the interest of the peace. He tells him to hand over his gem which is imbedded on his forehead to *Yudhishthira* so that he may receive protection अस्त्रं ब्रह्मशिरास्तात विद्वान्पार्थो धनंजयः | उत्सृष्टवान्न रोषेण न नाशाय तवाहवे || अस्त्रमस्त्रेण तु रणे तव संशमयिष्यता | विसृष्टमर्जुनेनेदं पुनश्च तिसंहृतम्||..एवं धृतिमतः साधोः सर्वास्त्रविदुशः सतः | सभ्रातृबन्धोः कस्मात्त्वं वधमस्य चिकीर्षसि ||..पाण्डवास्त्वं च राष्ट्रं च सदा संरक्ष्यमेव हि | तस्मात्संहर दिव्यं त्वमस्त्रमेतन्महाभुज ||..मणिं चैव प्रयच्छाद्य यस्ते शिरसि तिष्ठति | एतदादाय ते प्राणान्प्रतिदास्यन्ति पाण्डवाः ||'.*Ashvatthama* is reluctant to part with the gem saying that it is more valuable than all the gems which *Pandavas* and *Kauravas* had any time. It keeps his safe from weapons, illness, hunger, thirst, gods, *asuras*, and *danavas*. However respecting his advice he will give the gem to *Yudhishthira*. But he warns that since the *Brahmashira* weapon can not be withdrawn it will surely fall on the womb of some member of *Pandava's* family. *Vyasa* helplessly agrees for the sake of peace. The weapon accordingly falls on *Abhimanyu's* unborn child still nestling in *Uttara's* womb 'पाण्डवैर्यानि रत्नानि यच्चान्यत्कौरवैर्धनम्| अवाप्तमिह तेभ्योऽयं मणिर्मम विशिष्यते || यमाबध्य भयं नास्ति शस्त्रव्याधिक्षुधाश्रयम्| देवेभ्यो दानवेभ्यो वा नागेभ्यो व कथंचन ||..एवंवीर्यो मणिरयं न मे त्याज्यः कथंचन || यत्तु मे भगवानाह तन्मे कार्यमनन्तरम्| अयं मणिरयं चाहमीषिका तु पतिष्यति || गर्भेषु पाण्डवेयानाममोघं चैतदुत्तमम्| न च शक्तोऽस्मि भगवन्संहर्तुं पुनरुद्यतम्|| एतदस्त्रमतश्चैव गर्भेषु विसृजाम्यहम्| न च वाक्यं भगवतो न करिष्ये महामुने || एवं कुरु न चान्या तु बुद्धिः कार्या त्वयानघ | गर्भेषु पाण्डवेयानां विसृज्यैतदुपारम || ततः परममस्त्रं तु द्रौणिरुद्यतमाहवे | द्वैपायनवचः श्रुत्वा गर्भेषु प्रमुमोच ह ||'.

Krishna is satisfied with *Ashvatthama's* decision to release the arrow on *Uttara's* womb, recalling a *Brahmin's* earlier prophesy that when *Pandava's* end comes nearer, a son will be born, who will be known as *Parikshita*, having died earlier would come to life again to augment *Pandava* dynasty 'परिक्षीणेषु कुरुषु पुत्रस्तव भविष्यति | एतदस्य परिक्षित्त्वं गर्भस्थस्य भविष्यति || तस्य तद्वचनं साधोः सत्यमेतद्भविष्यति | परिक्षिद्भविता ह्येषां पुनर्वंशकरः सुतः

||'. Hearing this, *Ashvatthama* angrily responds that *Krishna* is partial to *Panadvas*, saying the womb will surely fall and no miracle would ever revive it. *Krishna* equally assures him that child in the womb will grow fully even after the weapon has destroyed it and *Ashavatthama* will be known as a cruel child-killer for the rest of his life wandering the worlds friendless for three thousand years, performing evil deeds and reaping their fruits. *Krishna* challenges him that he will bring back the child to life from the womb destroyed by the terrible weapon and he will rule for many years - 'नैतदेवं यथाऽत्थ त्वं पक्षपातेन केशव वचनं पुण्डरीकाक्ष न च मद्वाक्यमन्यथा || पतिष्यति तदस्त्रं हि गर्भे तस्या मयोद्यतम्| विराटदुहितुः कृष्ण यं त्वं रक्षितुमिच्छसि || अमोघः परमास्त्रस्य पातस्तस्य भविष्यति | स तु गर्भो मृतो जातो दीर्घमायुरवाप्स्यति || त्वां तु कापुरुषं पापं विदुः सर्वे मनीषिणः | असकृत्पापकर्माणं बालजीवितघातकम्|| तस्मात्त्वमस्य पापस्य कर्मणः फलमाप्नुहि | त्रीणी वर्षसहस्राणि चरिष्यसि महीमिमाम्|| अप्राप्नुवन्क्वचित्क्वचित्काञ्चित्संविदं जातु केनचित्| निर्जनानसहायस्त्वं देशान्प्रविचरिष्यसि ||..वयः प्राप्य परिक्षितु वेदव्रतमवाप्य च || कृपाच्छारद्वताच्छूरः सर्वास्त्राण्युपपत्स्यते ||..अहं तं जीवयिष्यामि दग्धं शस्त्राग्नितेजसा | पश्य मे तपसो वीर्यं सत्यस्य च नराधम ||'. *Vyasa* tells *Ashvatthama* that what *Krishna* has spoken will certainly come to pass 'यस्मादनादृत्य कृतं त्वयास्मान्कर्म दारुणम्| ब्राह्मणस्य सतश्चैव यस्मात्ते वृत्तमीदृशम्|| तस्माद्यद्देवकीपुत्र उक्तवानुत्तमं वचः | असंशयं ते तद् भावि क्षत्रधर्मस्त्वयाऽऽश्रितः ||' *Ashvatthama* saying that let *Krishna's* words come out true, hands over the gem to *Yudhishthira* and departs to forests with sadness 'सहैव भवता ब्रह्मन्स्थास्यामि पुरुषोष्विह | सत्यवागस्तु भगवानयं च पुरुषोत्तमः || प्रदायाथ मणिं द्रौणिः पाण्डवानां महात्मनाम्| जगाम विमनास्तेषां सर्वेषां पश्यतां वनम्||'.

Then lead by *Krishna* along with *Vyasa* and *Narada* they go to *Draupadi*. *Bhima* hands over the gem to her, informing her that since *Ashvatthama* was their Teacher's son, he was not killed, only his gem was taken from him. *Draupdi* though not very pleased, commends his action saying *Guru's* son is *Guru* himself. Then she hands over the gem to *Yudhishthira* with a request that it should always be in his crown 'पाण्डवाश्चापि गोविन्दं पुरस्कृत्य हतद्विपः | कृष्णद्वैपायनं चैव नारदं च महामुनिम् || द्रोणपुत्रस्य सहजं मणिमादाय सत्वराः | द्रौपदीमभ्यधावन्त प्रायोपेतां मनस्विनीम्||..ततो राज्ञाभ्यनुज्ञातो भीमसेनो महाबलः | प्रददौ तं मणिं दिव्यं वचनं चेदमब्रवीत्|| अयं भद्रे तव मणिः पुत्रहन्तुर्जितः स ते | उत्तिष्ठ शोकमुत्सृज्य क्षत्रधर्ममनुस्मर ||..जित्वा मुक्तो द्रोणपुत्रो ब्राह्मण्याद्गौरवेण च || यशोऽस्य पतितं देवि शरीरं त्वावशेषितम्| वियोजितश्च मणिना भ्रंशितश्चायुधं भुवि || केवलानृण्यमाप्तास्मि गुरुपुत्रो गुरुर्मम | शिरस्येयं मणिं राज प्रतिबध्नातु भारत || तं गृहित्वा ततो राजा शिरस्येवाकरोत्तदा | गुरोरुच्छिष्टमित्येव द्रौपद्या वचनादपि || ततो दिव्यं मणिवरं शिरसा धारयन्प्रभुः | शुशुभे स तदा राजा सचन्द्र इव पर्वतः ||'.

When *Yudhishthira* asked *Krishna* how could the evil minded *Ashvatthama* could defeat *Panchalas* so decisively, *Krishna* tells him that it was undoubtedly due to his penance and devotion to *Shiva* 'कथं नु कृष्ण पापेन क्षुद्रेणाकृतकर्मणा | द्रौणीना निहताः सर्वे मम पुत्रा महारथाः || तथा कृतास्त्रविक्रान्ताः सहस्रशतयोधिनः | द्रुपदस्यात्मजाश्चैव द्रोणपुत्रेण पातिताः || किं नु तेन कृतं कर्म तथायुक्तं नरर्षभ | यदेकः समरे सर्वानवधीन्नो गुरोः सुतः ||'. But one should not be unduly concerned but perform such acts in future which are desirable to be done 'नूनं स देवदेवानामीश्वरेश्वरमव्ययम्| जगाम शरणं द्रौणिरेकस्तेनावधीद्बहून्||.. न तन्मनसि कर्तव्यं न च तद्द्रौणिना कृतम्| महादेवप्रसादेन कुरु कार्यमनन्तरम्||'.

Chapter XV

With all the vestiges of *Kauarvas* thus obliterated form the face of the earth, *Dhritarashtra* ame helpless like a huge tree whose branches are cut off 'हते पुत्रशेते दीनं छिन्नशाखमिव दुमम्| पुत्रशोकाभिसंतप्तं धृतराष्ट्रं नीम्|| ध्यानमूकत्वमापन्नं चिन्तया समभिप्लुतम्|'. Seeing him thus sunk in sorrow, *Sanjaya* asked what he is thinking of, ce there are no one to help him to lessen the burden of his sorrow, all sons and elders having died in the r and the earth becoming barren and kings are resting in the bosom of the inexorable *Time*. Therefore, time has come for him to think of completing the rites and rituals for the dead 'किं शोचसि महाराज नास्ति शोके सता | अक्षौहिण्यो हताश्चाष्टौ दश चैव विशाम्पते || निर्जनेयं वसुमती शून्या सम्प्रति केवला |..सहैव तव पुत्रेण सर्वे वै निधनं गताः || पितृणां पुत्रपौत्राणां ज्ञातीनां णां तथा | गुरूणां चानुपूर्व्येण प्रेतकार्याणि कारय ||'.

Hearing these unpleasant words *Dhritarashtra* laments that with his sons, councilors and ndred dead, he is left alone to wander in the world in sorrow. Not having listened to the well-wishers d not even *Krishna's* pleadings, he has now to suffer for his thoughtlessness. Who else could there be the world more unfortunate than his own self! Indeed he must be reaping fruits of some actions rformed in previous lives 'हतपुत्रो हतामात्यो हतसर्वसुहृज्जनः | दुःखं नूनं भविष्यामि विचरन्पृथिवीमिमाम्|| किं नु बन्धुविहीनस्य जीवितेन य वै | लूनपक्षस्य इव मे जराजीर्णस्य पक्षिणः || हतराज्यो हतबन्धुर्हतचक्षुश्च वै तथा | न भ्राजिष्ये महाप्राज्ञ क्षीणरश्मिरिवांशुमान्|| न कृतं सुहृदां वाक्यं जामदग्नस्य मतः | नारदस्य च देवर्षेः कृष्णद्वैपायनस्य च || सभामध्ये तु कृष्णेन यच्छ्रेयोऽभिहितं मम | अलं वैरेण ते राजन्पुत्रः संगृह्यतामिति || तच्च वाक्यमकृतवाहं भृशं तपामि दुर्मतिः |..नूनं व्यपकृतं किं चिन्मया पूर्वेषु जन्मसु || येन मां दुःखभागेषु धाता कर्मसु युक्तवान्| '.

Sanjaya was *Dhritarashtra's* well-wisher and yet he could not but point out unhesitatingly that cannot disown his responsibility completely. When young Duryodhana was speaking words of rogance he had not restrained him, nor did he listen to the words of wisdom spoken by *Bhishma*, *rona* or *Vidura*, not even by *Krishna*, *Narada* or *Vyasa*. Instead of preventing the war, he sat ninvolved not taking sides. It is understandable that he was young, arrogant and ever keen to fight but *hritarashtra* was well read and wise. Therefore, if he had performed his actions properly from the very eginning then he would not have to now. Attached to his sons, *Dhritarashtra* did every thing that eased *Duryodhana*. Therefore, it is not proper to blame any one else than one's own self. One who aves for honey high on the trees keeping his eyes closed, has to rue sitting below not getting the honey. istressed persons do not get not only their desired fruits but no fruit at all. One is not called wise, if he overs himself with cloth soaked with oil and later puts it to fire. Along with his sons, he himself was eep in greed, which *Arjuna* as fire has ignited. It is disgraceful for him now to wander with tears in eyes. Vise ones do not commend it, therefore giving up this sorrow he should reconcile to the reality 'शोकं जन्व्यपनुद श्रुतास्ते वेदनिश्चयाः | शास्त्रागमाश्च विविधा वृद्धेभ्यो नृपसत्तम || यथा यौवनजं दर्पमास्थिते तं सुते नृप || न त्वया सुहृदां वाक्यं ब्रुवतामवधारितम्|...न धर्मः सत्कृतः कश्चिन्नित्यं युद्धमभीप्सता | अल्पबुद्धिरहंकारी नित्यं युद्धमिति ब्रुवन्|| क्रूरो दुर्मर्षणो नित्यमसंतुष्टश्च वीर्यवान्|| श्रुतवानसि धावी सत्यवांश्चैव नित्यदा | न मुह्यन्ति दृशा सन्तो बुद्धिमन्तो भवादृशः ||..मध्यस्थो हि त्वमप्यासीर्न क्षमं किञ्चिदुक्तवान्| दुर्धरेण त्वया भारस्तुलया न समं धृतः || दादेव मनुष्येण वर्तितव्यं यथाक्षमम्| यथा नातीतमर्थं वै पश्चात्तापेन युज्यते || पुत्रगृद्ध्या त्वया राजन्प्रियं तस्य चिकीर्षितम्| पश्चात्तापमिमं प्राप्तो न त्वं शोचितुमर्ह ा || मधु यः केवलं दृष्ट्वा प्रपातं नानुपश्यति | स भ्रष्टो मधुलोभेन शोचत्येवं यथा भवान्|| अर्थान्न शोचन्प्राप्नोति न शोचन् विन्दते फलम्| न शोचञ्श्रियमाप्नोति न चिर्नविन्दते परम्|| स्वयमुत्पादयित्वाग्निं वस्त्रेण परिवेष्टयन्| दह्यमानो मनस्तापं भजते न स पण्डितः ||..यच्चाश्रुपातात्कलिलं वदनं वहसे नृप | अशास्त्रदृष्टामेतद्धि प्रशंसन्ति पण्डिताः || विस्फुलिङ्गा इव ह्येनान्दहन्ति किल मानवान्| जहीहि मन्युं बुद्ध्या वै धारयात्मनामात्मना ||'.

Vidura comes to him soon and counsels him that every thing degenerates what was once generated; regress is in-built in every progress, every thing becomes separated what was once gathered; death is certain for one who is born. *Death* seizes both brave and the timid; those who do not battle die even as those who battle live long. Once *Time* seizes nothing else remains to be done. Creatures that are an-manifest prior to their birth, become manifest in the intermediate period, till they become unmanifest

again on death. Time seizes all creatures, none being dear or abhorrent. One who laments can neither accompany the dead nor can he avoid death when the time comes for him to die ; when such is the case why should one lament. Those who have come in the primordial world from unseen worlds go again to those unseen worlds when they die, some go earlier and some others later, why then should one lament on the inevitable? In truth he should not lament for those who died on the battlefield, because scriptures say that they surely go to heavens. They neither belonged to any one nor did any one belong to them. The world has seen innumerable fathers and mothers having received love from innumerable sons and daughters. But where are those fathers and mothers, sons and daughters? *Time* alone is inexorable, seizing one and all, ever remaining neutral, neither loving nor despising, awakening the inactive, ripening and destroying. Sorrow is not commended as righteousness for lamentation distances one from righteousness, desires and enterprises. Therefore, it is desirable that a man should give up mental affliction through intelligence and reflection. Any other methods are foolish ones. Man's aggregated *Karmas* remain dormant if he remains quiet, they become active if he becomes enterprising, and they speedily resolve even when one is active. Therefore, he advises *Dhritarashtra* to give lamentation and be active in life - 'सर्वे क्षयान्ता निचयाः पतनान्ताः समुच्छ्रयाः | संयोगा विप्रयोगान्ता मरणान्तं च जीवितम्|| यदा शूरं च भीरुं च यमः कर्षति भारत | तत्किं न योत्स्यन्ति हि ते क्षत्रियाः क्षत्रियर्षभ || आयुध्यमानो म्रियते युध्यमानश्च जीवति | कालं प्राप्य महाराज न कश्चिदतिवर्तते || अभावादीनि भूतानि भावमध्यानि भारत | अभावनिधनान्येव तत्र का परिदेवना | न शोचन्मृतमन्वेति न शोचन्म्रियते नरः | एवं सांसिद्धिके लोके किमर्थमनुशोचसि || कालः कर्षति भूतानि सर्वाणि विविधान्युत | न कालस्य प्रियः कश्चिन्न द्वेष्यः कुरुसत्तम || एकसार्थप्रयातानां सर्वेषां तत्र गामिनाम्| यस्य कालः प्रयात्यग्रे तत्र का परिदेवना ||..अदर्शनादापतिताः पुनश्चादर्शनं गताः | नैते तव न तेषां त्वं तत्र का परिदेवना ||..मातापितृसहस्राणि पुत्रदारशतानि च | संसारेष्वनुभूतानि कस्य ते कस्य वा वयम्|| न कालस्य प्रियः कश्चिन्न द्वेष्यः कुरुसत्तम | न मध्यस्थः क्वचित्कालः सर्वं कालः प्रकर्षति || कालः पचति भूतानि कालः संहरते प्रजाः | कालः सुप्तेषु जागर्ति कालो हि दुरतिक्रमः ||. शयानं चानुशेते हि तिष्ठन्तं चानितिष्ठति | अनुधावति धावन्तं कर्म पूर्वकृतं नरम्|| येन येन शरीरेण यद्यत्कर्म करोति यः | तेन तेन शरीरेण तत्फलं समुपाश्नुते ||...शुभेन कर्मणा सौख्यं दुःखं पापेन कर्मणा | कृतं भवति सर्वत्र नाकृतं विद्यते क्वचित्||'.

Dhritarashtra finds comfort in *Vidura's* advice, agreeing that attachment is sorrowful because it causes repeated sufferings, afflicting the body and intelligence. It is *divine will* that occasions sufferings. Therefore he confides in *Vyasa* that there is nothing for him to do except die, since there is no other way 'धिगस्तु खलु मानुष्यं मानुषेषु परिग्रहं | यतो मूलानि दुःखानि सम्भवन्ति मुहुर्मुहुः ||..येन दह्यन्ति गात्राणि येन प्रज्ञा विनश्यति | येनाभिभूतः पुरुषो मरणं बहु मन्यते || तदिदं व्यसनं प्राप्तं मयि भाग्यविपर्ययात्| नास्यान्तं नाधिगच्छामि ऋते प्राणविमोक्षणात्|| तथैवाहं करिष्यामि अद्यैव द्विजसत्तम |'. *Vyasa* too advises him that undoubtedly transient is the mortal life and no creature can circumvent what has been ordained by the *divine Will*. Then he reveals to him the divine intent and purpose to which he was witness. When once he had visited the *Indra's* court, he finds *Mother Earth* complaining to the gods the excess burden which has been carrying. *Vishnu* consoled her that he will soon take descent in the world and reduce that burden, using *Duryodhana* as his principal instrument. As fragments of *Kali* he and his brothers with *Shakuni* and many kings will cause destruction. Therefore, since *Duryodhana* was born for that purpose he has now died having fulfilled that purpose 'न तेऽस्त्यविदितं किंचिद्वेदितव्यं परन्तप | अनित्यतां हि मर्त्यानां विजानासि न संशयः ||..न च दैवकृतो मार्गः शक्यो भूतेन केनचित्| घटतापि चिरं कालं नियन्तुमिति मे मतिः || देवतानां हि यत्कार्यं मया प्रत्यक्षतः श्रुतम्| तत्तेऽहं सम्प्रवक्ष्यामि यथा स्थैर्यं भवेत्तव ||..उपगम्य तदा धात्री देवानाह समागतान्|| यत्कार्यं मम युष्माभिर्ब्रह्मणः सदने तदा | प्रतिज्ञातं महाभागास्तच्छीघ्रं संविधीयताम्|| तस्यास्तद्वचनं श्रुत्वा विष्णुर्लोकनमस्कृतः | उवाच वाक्यं प्रहसन्पृथिवीं देवसंसदि || धृतराष्ट्रस्य पुत्राणां यस्तु ज्येष्ठः शतस्य वै | दुर्योधन इति ख्यातः स ते कार्यं करिष्यति ||..तस्यार्थे पृथिवीपालाः कुरुक्षेत्रे समागताः || अन्योन्यं घातयिष्यन्ति दृढैः शस्त्रैः प्रहारिणः | तास्ते भविता देवि भारस्य युधि नाशनम्|| य एष सुतो राजँल्लोकसंहारकारणात्|| कलेरंशः समुत्पन्नो गान्धार्या जठरे नृप | दैवयोगात्समुत्पन्ना भ्रातरश्चास्य तादृशः | शकुनिर्मातुलश्चैव कर्णश्च परमः सखा ||'.

Vyasa then pointed out that he had revealed this in confidence to *Yudhishthira* during *Rajasuya* sacrifice and therefore, he had tried to avoid war with *Kauravas*. *Dhritarashtra* replies that his mind is confused and is not in a position to reflect upon his words. He will, therefore, surrender to the *divine will* and stop lamenting any longer. Hearing this, *Vyasa* proceeds to his hermitage 'एष चार्थो महाबाहो पूर्वमेव मया श्रुतः | कथितो धर्मराजस्य राजसूये क्रतूत्तमे || यतितं धर्मपुत्रेण मया गुह्य निवेदिते | अविग्रहे कौरवाणां दैवं तु बलवत्तरम्|| अनतिक्रमणीयो हि विधि राजन्कथंचन | कृतान्तस्य तु भूतेन स्थावरेण चरेण च ||..मम चैव नियोगेन विधेश्चाप्यनिवर्तनात्| पाण्डवानां च कारुण्यात्प्राणान्धारय भारत || पुत्रशोकं समुत्पन्नं हुताशं ज्वलितं यथा | प्रज्ञाम्भसा महाभाग निर्वापय सदा सदा || तच्छ्रुत्वा तस्य वचनं व्यासस्यामिततेजसः | मुहूर्तं समनुध्यायन्धृतराष्ट्रोऽभ्यभाषत || महता शोकजालेन प्रणुन्नोऽस्मि

द्विजोत्तम | नात्मानमवबुध्यामि मुह्यमानो मुहुर्मुहुः ||'.

Dhritarashtra composes himself and proceeds to the battlefield along with *Gandhari* and widows of his sons and grandsons, inhabitants of *Hastinapura* following them. *Ashvatthama*, *Kripa* and *Kritaverma* were already there. Approaching *Dhritarashtra*, they offer their respects ant convey him that having heard that *Duryodhana's* unrighteous death, they killed *Draupadi's* sons and the *Panchalas* and fearing *Pandavas*, they dispersed, *Kripa* going to *Hastinapur*, *Kritaverma* to his own country and *Ashvatthama* to *Vyasa's* hermitage 'पुत्रस्तव महाराज कृत्वा कर्म सुदुष्करम्| गतः सानुचरो राजञ्शक्रलोकं महीपते || . . अभीता युद्ध्यमानास्ते घ्नन्तः शत्रुगणान्बहून्| वीरकर्माणि कुर्वाणाः पुत्राते निधनं गताः || ध्रुवं सम्प्राप्य लोकांस्ते निर्मलाञ्शस्त्रानिर्जितान्| भास्वरं देहमास्थाय विहरन्त्यमरा इव ||..अधर्मेण हतं श्रुत्वा भीमसेनेन ते सुतम्| सुप्तं शिबिरमामाद्य पाण्डूनां कदनं कृतम्|| पञ्चाला निहताः सर्वे धृष्टद्युम्नपुरोगमाः | द्रुपदस्यात्मजाश्चैव द्रौपदेयाश्च पातिनाः ||..अपक्रम्य तु ते राजन्सर्व एव महारथाः | आमन्त्र्यन्योन्यमुद्विग्नास्त्रीधा ते प्रययुस्तदा || जगाम हस्तिनापुरं कृपः शारद्वतस्तदा | स्वमेव राष्ट्रं हार्दिक्यो द्रौणिर्व्यासाश्रमं ययौ ||'.

When *Yudhishthira* comes to know that *Dhritarashtra* has left *Hastinapur* accompanied by his family to the banks of *Ganga* to perform the rites rituals for the deceased ones, he too reaches there with his brothers, *Krishna*, *Satyaki* and *Yuyutsu*. When the grieving ladies see him they gather around him lamenting how could a righteous person like him perform such dastardly acts, bringing death to his elders and cousins, causing the end of the *Kuru* family? How could he enjoy the lands now without them by his side 'हतेषु सर्वसैन्येषु धर्मराजो युधिष्ठिरः | शुश्रुवे पितरं वृद्धं नियान्तं गजसाह्वयात्|| सोऽभ्ययात्पुत्रशोकार्तः पुत्रशोकपरिप्लुतम्| शोचमानं महाराज भ्रातृभिः सहितस्तदा ताभिः परिवृत्तो राजा क्रोशन्तीभिः सहस्रशः | ऊर्ध्वबाहुभिरार्ताभी रुदतीभिः प्रियप्रियैः || क्व नु धर्मज्ञता राज्ञः क्व नु साद्यानृशंसता | यच्चावधीत्पितॄन्भ्रातॄन्गुरुपुत्रान्सखीनापि || घातयित्वा कथं द्रोणं भीष्मं च पितामहम्| मनस्तेऽभून्महाबाहो हत्वा चापि जयद्रथम्|| किं नु राज्येन ते कार्यं पितॄन्भ्रातॄनपश्यतः | अभिमन्युं च दुर्धर्षं द्रौपदेयांश्च भारत ||'. *Yudhishthira* had no words to speak and stood with his head bowed low without speaking a word.

Then with respect and humility, *Yudhishthira* and others approach *Dhritarashtra* each of them identifying themselves. When *Yudhishthira* identified himself, the sorrowing father embraced him but without any trace of happiness, as if he was searching for some one with flaring eyes. *Krishna* understood the uneasiness & the concealed anger in those searching eyes. When *Bhima* came forward to present himself next, he pushed him aside and instead placed *Bhima's* statue made of iron, which *Duryodhana* earlier was using as target during his training to challenge *Bhima.* Without realizing the masquerade, *Dhritarashtra,* thinking it to be *Bhima* himself, pressed it to his chest with all his strength of thousand elephants. The iron statue broke in pieces, *Dhritarashtra* cried in pain with blood oozing out his mouth. 'ववन्दे पितरं ज्येष्ठं धर्मराजो युधिष्ठिरः || तमात्मजान्तकरणं पिता पुत्रवधार्दितः | अप्रियमाणः शोकार्तः पाण्डवं परिषस्वजे || धर्मराजं परिष्वज्य सान्त्वयित्वा च भारत | दुष्टात्मा भीममन्वैच्छद्दिधक्षुरिव पावकः || तस्य संकल्पमाज्ञाय भीमं प्रत्यशुभं हरिः | भीममाक्षिप्य पाणिभ्यां प्रददौ भीममायसम्|| प्रागेव तु महाबुद्धिर्बुद्ध्वा तस्येङ्गितं हरिः | संविधानं महाप्राज्ञस्तत्र चक्रे जनार्दनः || तं गृहीत्वैव पाणिभ्यां भीमसेनामयस्मयम्| बभञ्ज बलवान्राजामन्यमानो वृकोदरम्|| नागायुतबलप्राणः स राजा भीममायसम्| भङ्क्त्वा विमथितोरस्कः सुस्राव रुधिरं मुखात्|| ततः पपात मेदन्यां तथैव रुधिरोक्षितः | प्रपुष्पिताग्रशिखरः पारिजात इव द्रुमः ||'.

Though natural seeing this unseemly reaction, *Sanjaya* remonstrates his master, saying *calm down, calm down.* Once his anger subsides, *Dhritarashtra* feels embarrassed realizing his unsavory impulse lamenting *alas Bhima, alas Bhima.* Then *Krishna,* seeing that his anger has lost its sting, tells him not be miserable since he has not killed *Bhima* but only broken the iron statue to pieces. He tells him that observing his anger overpowering his mind, he himself had pulled *Bhima* aside and placed the iron statue in his presence, since killing *Bhima* would not bring back any of his sons to life. 'मा शुचो धृतराष्ट्र त्वं नैष भीमस्त्वया हतः | आयसी प्रतिमा ह्येषा त्वया निष्पातिता विभो || त्वं क्रोधवशमापन्न विदित्वा भरतर्षभ | मयापकृष्टः कौन्तेयो मृत्योर्दंष्ट्रान्तरः गतः ||..तस्मात्पुत्रेण या तेऽसौ प्रतिमा कारिताऽऽयसी | भीमस्य सेयं कौरव्य तवैवोपहृता मया ||..न त्वेतत्ते क्षमं राजन्हन्यास्त्वं यद्वृकोदरम्| न हि पुत्रा महाराज जीवयुस्ते कथंचन || तस्माद्यत्कृतमस्माभिर्मन्यमानैः शमं इति | अनुमन्यस्व तत्सर्वं मा च शोके मनः कृथः ||. *Krishna's* words having softened *Dhritarashtra* frayed emotions, he agrees that his excessive attachment to his sons made him to think such evil thought. Now that he is composed, he is happy that *Krishna* has saved *Bhima* from being killed by him. Then calling each of the *Pandavas* by name he embraces them and wishes them well.

When they go to *Gandhari,* who was a पतिव्रता, woman of disciplined austerities and perfected penance - 'पतिव्रता महाभागासमानव्रतचारिणी | उग्रेण तपसा युक्ता सततं सत्यवादिनी ||', her anger flares up seeing *Bhima* who was the cause for the death of hers sons and even her son-in-law *Jayadratha* not spared by *Arjuna.* A thought comes to her mind to curse them all, which *Vyasa* observing through his spiritual eye, consoles her, not to be angry with them and stop any harsh words come from her mouth - 'तस्याः पापमभिप्रायं विदित्वा पाण्डवान्प्रति | ऋषिः सत्यवतीपुत्रः प्रागेव समबुद्ध्यत ||.. दिव्येन चक्षुषा पश्यन्मनसा तद्गतेन च | सर्वप्राणभृतां भावं स तत्र समबुध्यत ||' He reminds her that she too on many occasions had declared when *Duryodhana* had asked for his victory, that success would always be where righteousness resides. She having always spoken truth, her words have proved that righteousness has finally won. Therefore, remembering धर्म she should not be angry with them but compassionate 'न कोपः पाण्डवे कार्यो गान्धारि शममाप्नुहि | वचो निगृह्यतामेतच्छृणु चेदं वचो मम || उक्तास्यष्टादशाहानि पुत्रेण जयमिच्छता | शिवमाशास्व मे मातर्युध्यमानस्य शत्रुभिः || सा तथा याच्यमाना त्वं कालेकाले जयैषिणा | उक्तवत्यसि गान्धारि यतो धर्मस्ततो जयः || विग्रहे तुमुले गङ्गा गत्वा पारमसंशयम् | जितं पाण्डुसुतैर्युद्धे नूनं धर्मस्ततोऽधिकः || क्षमाशीला पुरा भूत्वा साद्य न क्षमसे कथम् | अधर्मं जहि धर्मज्ञे यतो धर्मस्ततो जयः || स्वां च धर्मं परिस्मृत्य वाचं चोक्तां मनस्विनि | कोपं संयच्छ गान्धारि मैवं भूः सत्यवादिनि ||.'

Gandhari replies that she has no grudge against any of them, they being as dear to her as they are to *Kunti*. She admits that *Duryodhana*, *Shakuni*, *Karna* and *Dushasana* were responsible for the events and not *Pandavas*. But she feels that it was not proper for *Bhima* to insult *Duryodhana* in the manner he did, in *Krishna's* presence, making her wonder whether after all war reduces every one to be savage 'भगवन्नाभ्यसूयामि नैतानिच्छामि नश्यतः | पुत्रशोकेन तु बलात्मनो विह्वलतीव मे || यथैव कुन्त्या कौन्तेया रक्षितव्यास्तथा मया | तथैव धृतराष्ट्रेण रक्षितव्या यथा त्वया || दुर्योधनापराधेन शकुनेः सौबलस्य च | कर्णदुःशासनाभ्यां च कृतोऽयं कुरुसंक्षयः || नापराध्यति बीभत्सुर्न च पार्थो वृकोदरः | नकुलः सहदेवश्च नैव जातु युधिष्ठिरः ||'.*Bhima* concedes that he was desperate to kill *Duryodhana* even using unrighteous means, fearing his own life, since it was impossible to defeat him in righteous manner. He justifies his actions saying that *Duryodhana* too had used unrighteous means to defeat *Yudhishthira* in the game of dice and feared that he may regain the empire in the same manner. Now that *Duryodhana* is dead they are all calm 'तच्छ्रुत्वा वचनं तस्या भीमसेनोऽथ भीतवत् | गान्धारीं प्रत्युवाचेदं वचः सानुनयं तदा || अधर्मो यदि वा धर्मस्त्रासात्तत्र मया कृतः | आत्मानं त्रातुकामेन तन्मे त्वं क्षन्तुमर्हसि || न हि युद्धेन पुत्रस्ते धर्म्येण स महाबलः | शक्यः केनचिदुद्यन्तुमतो विषममाचरम् || अधर्मेण जितः पूर्वं तेन चापि युधिष्ठिरः | निकृताश्च सदैव स्म ततो विषममाचरम् ||'. *Bhima's* justification does not appear to hold water, since *Duryodhana's* unrighteous actions do not validate his own unrighteous action. But human standards fail to explain actions when they are performed with anger and continued hatred for each other in their hearts.

Gandhari pardons *Bhima* becoming happy to hear from him that *Duryodhana* was stronger than him but she does not condone his killing *Dushasana* in most cruel and ignoble manner, not commended by any धर्म. Here *Bhima's* response was far from convincing, when he admits that it is not proper for one to drink any one's blood, then how could it be justifiable in his case? He confides that though he was angry when he saw *Dushasana* lauding *Vrishasena* killing *Nakula's* horses, which reminded him the time when he had pulled *Draupadi's* hair and he in return vowed to kill him, he did not drink *Dushasana's* blood contrary the popular perception, the same not having passed beyond his lips and teeth, which will certainly be vouchsafed by *Yamadharmaraja.* If he had not fulfilled his vow then where will be his क्षत्रधर्म - 'अन्यस्यापि न पातव्यं रुधिरं किं पुनः स्वकम् | यथैवात्मा तथा भ्राता विशेषो नास्ति कश्चन || रुधिरं न व्यतिक्रामद्दन्तोष्ठं मेऽम्ब मा शुचः | वैवस्वतस्तु तद्वेद हस्तौ मे रुधिरोक्षितौ ||..केशपक्षपरामर्शे द्राौपद्या द्यूतकारितं | क्रोधाद्यदब्रुवं चाहं तच्च मे हृदि वर्तते || क्षत्रधर्माच्च्युतो राज्ञि भवेयं शाश्वतीः समाः | प्रतिज्ञां तामनिस्तीर्य ततस्तत्कृतवानहम् ||'. This is contrary to the statement which he had made immediately after killing *Dushasana* breaking the ribs of his chest, he begins drinking the hot blood spewing from his heart, saying that it is sweeter than mother's milk, honey and flower mixed drink or any milk products 'आस्वाद्य चास्वाद्य च वीक्षमाणः क्रुद्धो हि चैनं निजगाद वाक्यम् || स्तन्यस्य मातुर्मधुसर्पिषो वा माध्वीकपानस्य च सत्कृतस्य | दिव्यस्य वा तोयरसस्य पानात्पयोदधिभ्यां मथिताच्च मुख्यात् || अन्यानि पानानि च यानि लोके सुधामृतस्वादुरसानि तेभ्यः | सर्वेभ्य एवाभ्यधिको रसोऽयं ममाद्य चास्याहितलोहितस्य ||.

With a great sense of resignation, *Gandhari* says that they both she and her husband are old and blind and with kingdom lost, why did he not leave at least one son for them. Then she asks about *Yudhishthira,* he comes forward trembling and offers his obeisance with great fear in his heart, saying,

Mother, here am I, the perpetrator of the dastardly act of killing her sons, responsible for causing death of many other kings as well. I deserve condemnation, let your curses be on me, verily the one who killed her dear ones, having destroyed them he is not keen to live any longer 'तमभ्यगच्छद्राजेन्द्रो वेपमानः कृताञ्जलिः | युधिष्ठिरस्त्विदं तत्र मधुरं वाक्यमब्रवीत्|| पुत्रहन्ता नृशंसोऽहं तव देवी युधिष्ठिरः | शापार्हः पृथिवीनाशे हेतुभूतः शपस्व माम्|| न हि जीवितेनार्थो न राज्येन धनेन वा | तादृशान्सुहृदो हत्वा मूढस्यास्य सुहृद्द्रुहः ||'. Seeing him mourning and his head bowed in sincere grief and repentance, *Gandhari* speaks to him kind words breathing heavy. But when *Yudhishthira* bowed down to her, *Gandhari* could not but see the fingers of his feet through the sheet which covered her eyes, and that very moment the fingers which earlier were fair and beautiful became burnt like dark cinders 'तस्यवनतदेहस्य पादयोर्निपतिष्यतः | युधिष्ठिरस्य नृपतेर्धर्मज्ञा दीर्घदर्शिनी || अंगुल्यग्राणि ददृशे देवी पट्टान्तरेण सा | ततः स कुनखीभूतो दर्शनीयनखोनृपः ||'. Seeing this unusual outcome, *Arjuna* was frightened and hid behind *Krishna*. Observing his trepidation, *Gandhari* gave up her anger and became calm and composed and treated all of them with motherly love.

Then they address themselves to *Kunti* who remembering the humiliation and tribulations suffered by them, sheds tears quietly. *Draupadi* mourns her dead children, seeing which *Gandhari* consoles saying that she too is sunk in deep sorrow. Then she says that surely *Time* is taking world to destruction of the world, seeing that even *Krishna* was not successful in conciliation. Therefore, at this hour every one has to be bold and composed, since she believes that it is through her fault that end has to this great family 'मैवं पुत्रीति शोकार्ता पश्य मामपि दुःखिताम्| मन्ये लोकविनाशोऽयं कालपर्यायनोदितः || अवश्यभावी सम्प्राप्तः स्वभावाल्लोकमहर्षणः | इदं तत्समनुप्राप्तं विदुरस्य वचो महत्|| असिद्धानुनये कृष्णे यदुवाच महामतिः | यस्मिन्नपरिहार्योऽर्थे व्यतीते च विशेषतः || मा शुचो न हि शोच्यास्ते संग्रामे निधनं गताः | यथैवाहं तथैव त्वं को नावाश्वासयिष्यति | ममैव ह्यपराधेन कुलमग्र्यं विनाशितम्||'.

Then with spiritual eye granted by *Vyasa Gandhari* sees the ghastly scene of her sons and grand-children lying dead on the battlefield. She laments that indeed she must have committed some great sin that she has to see her sons, grandsons, brothers and companions dead. Disturbed seeing the horrible sight, she declares that *Krishna* alone is responsible for her misery and of the widows left behind 'वरदानेन कृष्णस्य महार्षेः पुण्यकर्मणः | दिव्यज्ञानवलोपेता विविधं पर्यदेवयत्|| ददर्श सा बुद्धिमती दूरादपि यथान्तिके | रणाजिरं नृवीराणामद्भुतं लोमहर्षणम्||... पश्यैतां पुण्डरीकाक्ष स्नुषा मे निहतेश्वराः | प्रकीर्णकेशाः क्रोशन्तीः कुररीव माधव ||..पञ्चालानां कुरूणां च विनाशे मधुसूदन | पञ्चानामपि भूतानामहं वधमचिन्तयम्||..इतो दुःखतरं किं नु केशव प्रतिभाति मे | यदिमाः कुर्वते सर्वा रूपमुच्चावचं स्त्रियः || नूनमाचरितं पापं मया पूर्वेषु जन्मसु | या पश्यामि हतान्पुत्रान्पौत्रान्भ्रातृंश्च माधव ||'. *Gandhari* continues to protest *Krishna's* neglect and unconcern in preserving and protecting great *Kshatriya* traditions that lead *Pandavas* and *Kauravas* to fight each other and *Kuru* dynasty to be exterminated, 'ततः कोपपरिताङ्गी पुत्रशोकपरिप्लुता | जगाम शौरिं दोषेण गान्धारी व्यथितेन्द्रिया || पाण्डवा धार्तराष्ट्राश्च दग्धाः कृष्ण परस्परम्| उपेक्षिता विनश्यन्तस्त्वया कस्माज्जनार्दन || शक्तेन बहुभृत्येन विपुले तिष्ठता बले | उभयत्र समर्थेन श्रुतवाक्येन चैव ह || इच्छतोपेक्षितो नाशः कुरूणां मधुसूदन | यस्मात्त्वया महाबाहो फलं तस्मादवाप्नुहि ||'.

Then and in an a moment of distress, despair and dejection, she speaks out a terrible curse on *Krishna*, saying that if she is a पतिव्रता and served her husband sincerely and well with austerity, then by that power let the members of *Krishna* family, sons and tribes be destroyed by each other, at the end of six and thirty years from this day, even as *Pandavas* and *Kauravas* came to destroy each other, the rest wandering in wilderness orphaned and miserable, the women mourning and wailing for their dear ones even as the women of the *Bharatas* cried and wailed 'पतिशुश्रूषया यन्मे तपः किंचिदुपार्जितम्| तेन त्वां दुरवापेन शप्स्ये चक्रगदाधर || यस्मात्परस्परं घ्नन्तो ज्ञातयः कुरुपाण्डवाः | उपेक्षितास्ते गोविन्द तस्माज्ज्ञातीन्वधिष्यसि || त्वमप्युपस्थिते वर्षे षट्त्रिंशे मधुसूदन | हतज्ञातिर्हतामात्यो हतपुत्रो वनेचरः || अनाथवदविज्ञातो लोकेष्वनभिलक्षितः | कुत्सितेनाभ्युपायेन निधनं समवाप्स्यसि || तवाप्येवं हतसुता निहतज्ञातिबान्धवाः | स्त्रियः परिपतिष्यन्ति यथैता भरतस्त्रियः ||'.

Hearing these agonizing words spoken by *Gandhari,* a supremely confident *Krishna* replies, smiling as it were, that he is fully aware that the events will come to pass as she has spoken *Vrishnis* will surely be destroyed as *willed* by himself; he himself would cause their extermination, making them fight each other, since *Vrishnis* and *Yadavas* were unconquerable by other human beings and even gods. When *Pandavas* hear these awful words spoken by *Krishna, Pandavas* became agitated and loose all zest for life thereafter 'जानेऽहमेतदप्येवं चीर्णं चरसि क्षत्रिये | दैवादेव विनश्यन्ति वृष्णयो नात्र संशयः || संहर्ता वृष्णिचक्रस्य नान्यो मद्विद्यते शुभे |

अवध्यास्ते नैरग्न्यपि वा देवदानवैः || परस्परकृतं नाशमतः प्राप्स्यन्ति यादवाः ||'. .But she should not forget that she herself was responsible for the events that transpired. Having encouraged her arrogant and evil son who refused elders' cousel, and having done all errors, does she desire to hold him responsible. If any one sorrows for one who is dead or for some thinmg thatis lost then he would be adding more suffering to the earlir sufferings. Therefore, she should retrain her sorrow and give up further lamentation 'तवैव अपराधेन कुरवो निधनं गताः || यान्त्वं पुत्रं दुरात्मानमीर्षुमत्यन्तमानिनम्| दुर्योधनं पुरस्कृत्य दुष्कृतं साधु मन्यसे || निष्ठुरं वैरपुरुषं वृद्धानां शासनातिगम्| कथमात्मकृतं दोषं मय्याधातुमिहेच्छसि || मृतं वा यदि वा नष्टं योऽतीतमनुशोचति | दुःखेन लभते दुःखं द्वावनर्थौ प्रपद्यते ||..तूष्णीं बभूव गान्धारी शोकव्याकुललोचना ||'. Thus reprimanded by *Krishna, Gandhari* remains quiet..

Then as requested by *Dhritarashtra*, *Yudhishthira* with the help of *Sudharma*, *Dhaumya*, *Sanjaya*, *Vidura* and *Yuyutsu* arranges for the performance of funeral rites of the dead, noble and ordinary warrior, 'अनाथानां जनानां च सनाथानां' 'न येषामग्निं संस्कर्ता न च येऽत्राहिताग्नयः |'. Thereafter, *Kunti* hesitatingly approaches *Yudhishthira* with voice trembling with emotion and asks him to offer oblations to *Karna*, though he had fought for *Duryodhana*. *Pandavas* are surprised by this request till *Kunti* reveals the secret which she had hidden all these years, that he is their eldest brother, born in her womb through Surya's grace 'ततः कुन्ती महाराज सहसा शोककर्शिता || रुदती मन्दया वाचा पुत्रान्वचनमब्रवीत्|..यं सूतपुत्रं मन्यध्वं राधेयमिति पाण्डवाः || यो व्यराजच्च भूमध्ये दिवाकरः इव प्रभुः |..कुरुध्वमुदकं तस्य भ्रातुरक्लिष्टकर्मणः | स हि पूर्वजो भ्राता भास्करान्मय्यजायत || कुण्डली कावची शूरो दिवाकरसमप्रभः |.

Listening to these dreadful words, *Pandavas* confused and bewildered. Finally hissing like an injured serpent, *Yudhishthira* bursts out why did she keep this hidden from them? *Kauravas* were taking shelter behind his strong shoulders even as *Pandavas* were sheltered by *Arjuna*! Why did she allow *Arjuna* kill him, which has created in him more pain than even that death of *Abhimanyu* or *Draupadi's* sons. If he knew this earlier then *Kuru* family would not have ended in destruction. Then calling *Karna's* womenfolk he performs his funeral rites 'तत्र स पुरुषव्याघ्रः कुन्ती पुत्रो युधिष्ठिरः || उवाच मातरं वीरो निःश्वसन्निव पन्नगः |... अहो भवत्या मन्त्रस्य गूहनेन वयं हताः || निधनेन हि कर्णस्य पीडितास्तु सबान्धवाः | अभिमन्योर्विनाशेन द्रौपदेयवधेन च || पाञ्चालानां विनाशेन कुरूणां पतनेन च | ततः शतगुणं दुःखमिदं मामस्पृशद्भृशम्||..नेह स्म किंचिदप्राप्यं भवेदपि दिवि स्थितम्|| न चेदं वैशसं घोरं कौरवान्तकरं भवेत्||..तत आनायामास कर्णस्य सपरिच्छदाः || स्त्रियः कुरुपतिर्धीमान्भ्रातुः प्रेम्णा युधिष्ठिरः | स ताभिः सह धर्मात्मा प्रेतकृत्यमनन्तरम्|| चकार विधिवद्धीमान्धर्मराजो युधिष्ठिरः |'.

After completing all formalities relating to the funeral of the dead warriors, they stay on the banks of the river *Ganga* for a month in the company of seers like *Vyasa*, *Narada*, *Devala* and others. *Narada* then commends *Panadavas* having won the war to make the world safe from unrighteous people with their strength and the grace of *Krishna* on them 'भवता बाहुवीर्येण प्रसादान्माधवस्य च | जितेयमवनिः कृत्स्ना धर्मेण च युधिष्ठिर ||'. But *Yudhishthira* was not happy with the outcome condemning himself for the destruction of the family. He shares his thoughts with *Narada*, saying that he has been unhappy, realizing that *Aabhimanyu* and *Draupadi's* five sons are dead, and even *Krishna* too soon separating them when he returns to *Dvaraka*, 'इदं मम महद्दुःखं वर्तते हृदि नित्यदा | कृत्वा ज्ञातिक्षयमिमं महान्तं लोभकारितम्|| सौभद्रं द्रौपदेयांश्च घातयित्वा सुतान्प्रियान्| जयोऽयमजयाकारो भगवान्प्रतिभाति मे || द्रौपदी हतपुत्रेयं कृपणा हतबान्धवा | अस्मत्प्रियहिते युक्ता भूयः पीडयतीव माम् ||'. He rues especially from the moment he came to know that *Karna* was his elder brother, which even his brothers were not aware. With *Karna* on their side no one would ever dared to fight them, not even *Indra*. Often he would be angry with him but seeing his feet similar to those of *Kunti* his anger would pass wondering at this strange fact and not being wise. If he knew that he was his elder brother than all of tem would have given him due respect, 'इदमन्यत्तु भगवन्यत्त्वां वक्ष्यामि नारद | मन्त्रसंवरणेनास्मि कुन्त्या दुःखेन योजितः ||..तोयकर्माणि न कुन्ती कथयामास सूर्यजम्| पुत्रं सर्वगुणोपेतमवकीर्णं जले पुरा ||.. अजानता मया भ्राता राज्यलुब्धेन घातितः | तन्मे दहति गात्राणि तूलराशिमिवानलः | न हि तं वेद पार्थोऽपि भ्राता श्वेतवाहनः || नाहं न भीमो न यमौ स त्वस्मान्वेद सुव्रतः | .. सभायां गदतो द्यूते दुर्योधनहितैषिणः | तदा नश्यति मे रोषः पादौ तस्य निरीक्ष्य ह || कुन्त्या हि सदृशौ पादौ कर्णस्येति मतिर्मम | सादृश्यहेतुमन्विच्छन्पृथायास्तस्य चैव ह || कारणं नाधिगच्छामि कथंचिदपि चिन्तयन्|'. Then still under the spell of remorse and anger, he proceeds to offer oblations to *Karna* that 'पापेनासौ मया श्रेष्ठो भ्राता ज्ञातिर्निपातितः | अतो मनसि यद्गुह्यं स्त्रीणां तन्न भविष्यति ||' and in a fit of anger and remorse, he curses the entire women class declaring that no woman would from that day onward be capable of concealing any secret from others 'शशाप च महातेजाः सर्वलोकेषु योषितः | न गुह्यं धारयिष्यन्तीत्येवं दुःखसमन्विताः ||'.

Yudhishthira unable to come out of his depression tells *Arjuna* that possibly it would have been better if they had listened to *Sanjaya's* advice and gone to *Vrishni's* land and lived begging for food, in which case they would not been responsible for destruction of their cousins. Fie on these norms of warrior class, that to rule the worlds he had to kill his own kith and kin, since even after succeeding he is not happy. *Duryodhana* has gone to the heavens leaving his old parents in great distress, while they having lived to rule the country deprived of love, compassion, charity and austerities. Scriptures declare that study of scriptures, reciting holy names and visiting pilgrim centres and renunciation bring merits washing the demerits, freeing from the cycle of births and deaths. *Yudhishthira*, therefore, feels inclined to go to forests taking leave of his brother - 'यद्भैक्ष्यमाचारिष्यम वृष्ण्यन्धकपुरे वयम्| ज्ञातीन्निष्पुरुषान्कृत्वा नेमां प्राप्यस्याम दुर्गतिम्|| अमित्रा नः समृद्धार्था वृत्तार्थाः कुरवः किल | आत्मानमात्मना हत्वा किं धर्मफलमाप्नुमः || धिगस्तु क्षात्रमाचारं धिगस्तु बलपौरुषम्| धिगस्त्वमर्षं येनेमामापदं गमिता वयम्||...त्रैलोक्यस्यापि राज्येन नास्मान्कश्चित्प्रहर्षयेत्| बान्धवान्निहतान्दृष्ट्वा पृथिव्यां विजयैषिणः ||...इमौ हि वृद्धौ शोकाग्नौ प्रक्षिप्य स सुयोधनः | अस्मत्प्रद्वेषसंयुक्तः पापबुद्धिः सदैव ह ||...हताः शूरा कृतं पापं विषयः स्वो विनाशितः || हत्वा नो विगतो मन्युः शोको मा रुन्धयत्ययम्|| धनंजय कृतं पापं कल्याणेनोपहन्यते | ख्यापनेनानुतापेन दानेनतपसापि वा || निवृत्या तीर्थगमनाच्छ्रुतिस्मृतिजपेन वा || त्यक्तवांश्च पुनः पापं नालंकर्तुमिर्मति श्रुतिः | त्यागवाज्जन्ममरणे नाप्नोतीति श्रुतिर्यदा ||..वनमामन्त्र्य वः सर्वान्गमिष्यमि परंतप | न हि कृत्स्नतमो धर्मः शक्यः प्राप्तुमिति श्रुतिः ||'.

Listening to *Yudhishthira's* lamentation, his brothers become agitated, responding each one according to his own attributes (गुण) and inclination (स्वभाव). *Arjuna* tells him that he is surprised that as one born *Kshatriya* he should think of renouncing all enterprise after defeating enemies and conquering world. On the contrary he should offer himself for maintenance of the world order, like creator of the worlds offer himself for maintenance of the world order 'शत्रून्हत्वा महीं लब्ध्वा स्वधर्मेणोपपादिताम्| एवंविधं कथं सर्वं त्यजेया बुद्धिलाघवात्||..सर्वारम्भान्समुत्सृज्य हतस्वस्तिर्गकिंचनः | कस्मादाशंससे भैक्ष्यं कर्तुं प्राकृतवत्प्रभो || अस्मिन्राजकुले जातो जित्वा कृत्स्नां वसुंधराम्| धर्मार्थावखिलौ हित्वा वनं मौढ्यात्प्रतिष्ठसे ||... अवेक्षय यथान्यायं पश्य देवासुरं यथा ऽ राजन् किमन्यज्जतीनां वधाद्गृद्धयन्ति देवताः ||...इति देवा व्यवसिता वेदवादाश्च शाश्वताः | अधीयतेऽध्यापयन्ते यजन्ते याजयन्ति च || कृत्स्नं तदेव तच्छ्रेयो यदप्याददतेऽन्यतः | न पश्यामोऽन्यकृतं धनं किंचित्वयम्|| एवमेव राजानो जयन्ति पृथिवीमिमाम्| जित्वा ममेयं बुवते पुत्रा इव पितुर्धनम्|| विश्वरूपो महादेवः सर्वमेधे महामखे | जुहाव सर्वभूतानि तथैवात्मानमात्मना || शाश्वतोऽयं भूमिपथो नास्यन्तमनुशुश्रुम | महान्दाशरथः पन्था मा राजन्कुपथं गमः ||'.

Bhima was frank and outright in expressing his reaction bursting out that saying how come kindness and compassion has come for his cousins when such feelings have no place for a *Kshatriya*. Therefore, if he knew earlier that these were his thoughts then he too would not have lifted his weapons and accompanied him to beg for food and there would not have been such horrendous war. It appears that having killed the enemies, one kills oneself thereafter. If *Kshatriya* class having been created if one performs actions and lives one life accordingly, then if one is lead to denounce क्षत्रधर्म, then why should not find fault with Prajapati himself for having created *Kshatriya*- class! Taking shelter behind righteousness if one has to live like a recluse filling one's belly, then one likely to breach one's ordained duties and not fulfill ones obligations. If a king was to fulfill his objectives by living in forest, then mountains, birds and animals would attain heavens swiftly. Please observe the way of samsara, how every one is devoted to each one's duties. One ho does not perform one's ordained actions then the one will not attain fulfillment 'यदिमां भवतो बुद्धिं विद्याम वयमीदृशीम्| शस्त्रं नैव गहीष्याम कंचन || भैक्ष्यमेवाचरिष्याम शरीरस्याविमोक्षणात्| न चेदं दारुणं युद्धमभविष्यन्महीक्षितम्||..यथा शत्रून्घातयित्वा पुरुषः कुरुनन्दन | आत्मानं घातयेत पश्चात्कर्मेदं नस्तथोपमम्||,,..नेमे मृगाः स्वर्गजितो न वराहाः न पक्षिणः | अथान्येन प्रकारेण पुण्यमाहुर्न तं जनाः || यदि संन्यासतः सिद्धिं राजा कश्चिदवाप्नुयात्| पर्वताश्च द्रुमाश्चैव क्षिप्रं सिद्धिमवाप्नुयुः ||..अवेक्षस्व यथा स्वैः स्वैः कर्मभिर्व्यापृतं जगत्| तस्मात्कर्मैव कर्तव्यं नास्ति सिद्धिरकर्मणः ||'.

Nakula hesitate being younger but could not remain quiet no longer, remarking that the one, who goes against the *vedic* prescriptions, even if he performs all other actions well, would not succeed. Only he is called a true renunciate who keeping one's senses restrained, offers the wealth earned as an oblation in sacrifice. Wise ones having weighed all the four पुरुषार्थ*s* available, have placed domestic life on one side and all the other three - ब्रह्मचर्य, वानप्रस्थ and सन्यास on the other. He who follows the ordained *Path* alone is the true renunciate. For him on whom the family is dependent for him there is renunciation. One who renounces the internal and external objects which hinder one's spiritual progress, giving them alone

is true renunciation. When robbers abound and loot people, and there is no king to protect them, then *Kali yuga* comes in all intensity. Winning the world and performing sacrifices, giving charities as ordained, are established for *Kshatriya* for heavenly world 'न हि वेदोक्तमुत्सृज्य विप्रः सर्वेषु कर्मसु || देवयानेन नाकस्य पृष्ठमाप्नोति भारत |... आश्रमांस्तुलया सर्वान्धृतानाहुर्मनीषिणः | एकतश्च त्रयो राजन्गृहस्थाश्रम एकतः || समीक्ष्य तुलया पार्थ कामं स्वर्गं च भारत | अयं पन्था महर्षीणामियं लोकविदां गतिः || इति यः कुरुते भावं स त्यागी भरतर्षभ | न यः परित्यज्य गृहान्वनमेति विमूढवत्||.. अन्तर्बहिश्च यत् किञ्चिन्मनोव्यासङ्गकारकम्| परित्यज्य भवेत्त्यागी न हित्वा प्रतितिष्ठति ||..क्षत्रेण धर्मेण पराक्रमेण जित्वामहीं मन्त्रविद्भ्यः प्रदाय | नाकस्य पृष्ठेऽसि नरेन्द्र गन्ता न शोचितव्यं भवताद्य पार्थ ||'.

Sahadeva remarks that whatever satisfaction one gets one performing righteous actions renouncing all attachment to wealth and possessions that satisfaction let our well-wishers may receive for verily the two syllables मम *mine* stand for death and three syllables नमम *not mine* stand for immortality. Therefore, *immortal Brahman* and *Death* are both within one's own *self* and undoubtedly make each other confront with each other. Since *self* is immortal, by destruction of the body it will not be destroyed. Therefore a wise one would live his life giving up living a lonely life or as great persons lived their life earlier. If performing duties living life is unbecoming then how come great emperor like Manu lived their in *samsara*? The ruler who after getting the benefit of wealth and possessions does not enjoy them properly then indeed this life is of no value. Observe how creatures, whose outward life is different from the inward life. Only he who experiences the *Brahman* internally one that person is free from fear. Your are my father, mother, brother and teacher. Therefore, if he has spoken any thing out of sorrow, he should be excused. Whatever he has spoken proper or improper all that he has done out of his love for *Yudhishthira* -'द्र्यक्षरस्तु भवेन्मृत्युस्त्र्यक्षरं ब्रह्म शाश्वतम्| ममेति च भवेन्मृत्युर्न ममेति शाश्वतम्|| ब्रह्ममृत्यु ततो राजान्नात्मन्येव समाश्रितौ | अदृश्यमानौ भूतानि योधयेतामसंशयम्|| अविनाशोऽस्य सत्त्वस्य नियतो यदि भारत | हत्वा शरीरं भूतानां न हिंसा प्रतिपत्स्यते || तस्मादेकान्तमुत्सृज्य पूर्वैः पूर्वतरैश्च यः | पन्था निषेवितः सद्भिः सनिषेव्यो विजानता || स्वायम्भुवेन मनुना तथान्यैश्चाकवर्तिभिः | यद्यय ह्यधमः पन्थाः कस्मात्तैर्निषेवितः || लब्ध्वापि पृथिवीं कृत्स्ना सहस्थावराजङ्गमाम्| न भुङ्क्ते यो नृपः सम्यङ् निःफलं तस्य जीवितम्||... भवान् पिता भवान्माता भवान्भ्राता भवान्गुरुः | दुःखप्रलापानार्तस्य तन्मे त्वं क्षन्तुमर्हसि ||'.

Yudhishthira remains unmoved even after listening to these views. Then *Draupadi*, described as धर्मज्ञा, धर्मदर्शिनी speaks to him in amiable terms saying that he has won the lands not by listening scriptures nor by charity nor through arguments, nor by performing sacrifices, nor by begging. It is only after destroying many evil warriors in battles that this kingdom has been his, therefore he should take delight. Then she reminds him *Kunti's* words of confidence that he would be performing great deeds. Therefore, she wonders whether her words will turn out to be untrue seeing him despondent in this manner. Perhaps she herself is unfortunate of all women that she has to live even after all her sons are dead. He does not seem to respond to the feelings of others even when one is trying to understand his mind. Giving up the worlds he is grabbing unnecessary sufferings. Therefore, he should protect his people in righteous manner and rule the lands with mountains, forests and centres of inhabitants and not become disenchanted 'न क्लीबो वसुधां भुङ्क्ते न क्लीबो धनमश्नुते | न क्लीबस्य गृहे पुत्रा मत्स्याः पङ्क इवासते ||..न श्रुतेन न दानेन न सान्त्वेन न चेज्यया | त्वयेयं पृथिवी लब्धा न संकोचेन चाप्युत ||..तत त्वया निहता वीरा तस्माद्भुङ्क्ष्व वसुन्धराम्|| अनृत नाब्रवीच्छ्वश्रूः सर्वज्ञा सर्वदर्शिनी | युधिष्ठिरस्त्वा पाञ्चालि सुखे धास्यत्यनुत्तमे || हत्वा राजसहस्राणि वहून्याशुपराक्रमः | तद्व्यर्थं सम्प्रपश्यामि मोहात्तव जनाधिप ||.. साहं सवधमा लोके स्त्रीणां भरतसत्तम || तथा विनिकृता पुत्रैर्या हमिच्छामि जीवितुम्| प्रशाधि पृथिवीं देवीं प्रजा धर्मेण पालयन्|| सपर्वतवनद्वीपा मा राजन्विमना भव |'.

Bhima speaks again hesitatingly saying that he was of two mind whether to speak or not, therefore listen to what he speaks carefully since he seems to have fallen in obscurity, becoming confused and weak. Sickness assumes two forms, physical and mental, both supporting each other, one not being without the other, affecting each other. One who rues on earlier physical or mental things, he creates new miseries based on earlier ones, suffering two-fold. But *Yudhishthira* behaves as unhappy even when not unhappy, not happy even when happy, not remembering happy days in unhappiness and remembering unhappy days while in happiness. Indeed fate is a strong regulator seeing that your inclination seems to be ever anxious. You seem to be battling a similar battle as you did earlier with *Drona* and *Bhisma* only with this difference that in the present a battle there are neither arrows nor any

weapons, having to fight single handed. Without winning this battle if you die then you will have to be born again in life. Fortunately *Duryodhana* is dead and *Draupadi* is also freed from *Dushasana's* evil influence. Therefore perform *Ashvaamedha* sacrifice and all even *Krishna* will follow his lead - 'न वक्ष्यामि न वक्ष्यामीत्येवं मे मनसिस्थितम्| अतिदुःखात्तु वक्ष्यामि तन्निबोध जनाधिप ||...द्विविधो जायते व्याधिः शारीरो मनसस्तथा | परस्परं तयोर्जन्म निर्द्वन्द्वं नोपलभ्यते || 'शारीरज्जायते व्याधिर्मानसो नात्र संशयः | मानसाज्जायते वापि शारीर इति निश्चयः || शारीरं मानसं दुःखं योऽतीतमनुशोचति | दुःखेन लभते दुःखं द्वावनर्थौ च विन्दति ||...स त्वं न दुःखी दुःखस्य न सुखी च सुखस्य वा | न दुःखी सुखजातस्य न सुखी दुःखजस्य वा || स्मर्तुमिच्छसि कौरव्य दिष्टं हि बलवत्तरम्| अथवा ते स्वभावोऽयं येन पार्थीव क्लिश्यसे ||...यच्च ते द्रोणभीष्माभ्यां युद्धमासीदरिंदम | मनसैकेन योद्धव्यं तत्ते युद्धमुपस्थितम्|| यत्र नास्ति शरैः कार्यं न मित्रैर्न च बन्धुभिः | आत्मनैकेन योधव्यं तत्ते युद्धमुपस्थितम्|| तस्मिन्ननिर्जिते युद्धे प्राणान्यदि विमोक्ष्यसे | आन्यं देहं समास्थाय ततस्तैरपि योत्स्यसे ||...दिष्ट्या दुर्योधनः पापो निहतः सानुगो युधि | द्रौपद्याः केशपाशस्य दिष्ट्या त्वं पदावीं गतः || यजस्व वाजिमेधेन विधिवद् दक्षिणावता | वयं ते किंकराः पार्थ वासुदेवश्च वैर्यवान्||'.

Yudhishthira's mind still remains confused accusing *Bhima* that his mind is still affected by negative influences, thinking of ruling only kingdom, when even a king who rules the whole earth has only one stomach to fill. Such craving for possessions would never be fulfilled, it increasing even as it is fulfilled. An ascetic renouncing influence of senses becomes a recluse, but a ruler under the influence of senses is never satisfied. One who has given up enjoyment of pleasures they never sorrow. Why then does *Bhima* think of pleasures? Only when one renounces pleasures that he becomes delivered from unwholesome arguments. Then he reminds *Bhima* of what *Janaka* of olden era had said that people think that that he is lord of the wealth and possessions but none of them his. If *Mithila* burns, then there is nothing that is his 'असंतोषः प्रमादश्च मदो रागोऽप्रशान्तता | बलं मोहोऽभिमानश्चाप्युद्वेगश्चैव सर्वशः ||...य इमामखिलां भूमिं शिष्यादेको महीपतिः | तस्याप्युदरमेकं वै किमिदं त्वं प्रशंससि ||...विषयान्प्रतिसंगृह्य संन्यासं कुरुते यतिः | न च तुष्यन्ति राजानः पश्य बुद्ध्यन्तरं यथा ||..निरामिषा न शोचन्ति त्वं किमामिषम्| परित्यज्यामिषं सर्वं मृषावादात्प्रमोक्ष्यसे ||... अनन्तं बत मे वित्तं यस्यमे नास्ति किञ्चन | मिथिलां प्रदीप्तायां न मे दह्यति किञ्चन ||'.

An unconvinced *Arjuna* reminds *Yudhishthira* of also the occasions when *Janaka* wanted to renounce his wealth, possessions and kingdom and what his queen had advised him saying how could he think of being satisfied with little renouncing vast wealth and possessions. It is seen that even *Janaka* who was known in the three worlds as knower of the supreme truth had fallen in obscurity and gave up his delusion on being enlightened. In the same manner if they also engage themselves in spiritual activities and charities then he will remain compassionate to all, giving anger, arrogance and desires, devoted to the welfare of people and serving old and noble achieve the desired goals 'कथमुत्सृज्य राज्यं स्वं धनधान्यसमन्वितम्| कापालीं वृत्तिमास्थाय धानामुष्टिर्न ते वरः || प्रतिज्ञा तेऽन्यथा राजन्विचेष्टा चान्यथा तव | यद् राज्यं महदुत्सृज्य स्वल्पे तुष्यसि पार्थिव ||...तत्वज्ञो जनको राजा लोकेऽस्मिन्निति गीयते | सोऽप्यासीन्मोहसम्पन्नो मा मोहवशमन्वगाः || एवं धर्मानुक्रान्ता सदा दानतपःपरा | आनृशंस्यगुणोपेताः कामक्रोधविवर्जिताः || प्रजानां पालने युक्ता दानमुत्तममास्थिताः | इष्टॉल्लोकानावाप्स्यामो गुरुवृद्धोपयाचिनः ||'.

Arjuna then speaks to him again that having won kingdom fighting like a *Kshatriya* it is not proper for him to become despondent. Though क्षत्रधर्म is cruel, it is not given for a *Kshatriya* to renounce nor offer sacrifice, nor perform penance, nor to live on other person's wealth. *Yudhishthira* himself is qualified to speak on धर्म, of the past and the future. *Indra* was born a *Brahmin* but became a *Kshatriya* by inclination and killed *asuras* though they were his brothers born from the same *Prajapati*. He became worthy of respect and admiration becoming the lord of the gods. Therefore, *Yudhishthira* should give up his sorrow and rule like *Indra*. Whatever has happened was to happen and no one can surmount the divine *Will* 'क्षत्रधर्मेण धर्मज्ञ प्राप्य राज्यं सुदुर्लभम्| जित्वा चारीन्नरश्रेष्ठ तप्यते किं भृशं भवान्||..न त्यागो न पुनर्यज्ञो न तपो मनुजेश्वर | क्षत्रियस्य विधीयन्ते न परस्वोपजीवनम्|| स भवान् सर्वधर्मज्ञो धर्मात्मा भरतर्षभ | राजा मनीषी निपुणो लोके दृष्टपरावरः || ...जित्वारीन्क्षत्रधर्मेण प्राप्य राज्यमकण्टकम्| विजितात्मा मनुष्येन्द्र यज्ञदानपरो भव || इन्द्रो वै ब्राह्मणः पुत्रः क्षत्रियः कर्मणाभवत्| ज्ञातीनां पापवृत्तीनां जघान नवतीर्नव || तच्चास्य कर्म पूज्यं च प्रशस्तं च विशाम्पते | तेनेन्द्रत्वं समापेदे देवानामिति नः श्रुतम्||..मा त्वमेवं गते किंचिच्छोचेथाः क्षत्रियर्षभ | गतास्ते क्षत्रधर्मेण शस्त्रपूताः परां गतिम्|| भवितव्यं तथा तच्च यद्वृत्तं भरतर्षभ | दिष्टं हि राजशार्दूल न शक्यमतिवर्तितुम्||'.

Then *Vyasa* too counsels *Yudhishthira* that *Arjuna* has spoken wisely and धर्म is well established for human beings and one should perform duties assigned to a householder according to scriptures and righteousness as ordained, going to the forests not having been ordained for him.. Even as gods, ancestors, guests and servants follow their attributes and inclinations even do the animals, birds and

reptiles follow their ordained path. Since *Yudhishthira* himself is well-versed in धर्म, in penance and austerities, he too should not shirk the responsibility bestowed on him by inheritance to rule the ancestral kingdom wisely and well, all other enterprises being less commendable. Listening to his brothers he should govern, since क्षत्रधर्म and not सन्यास, shaving head and living in forest is not his धर्म. 'बीभत्सोर्वाचनं सौम्य सत्यमेतद्युधिष्ठिर | शास्त्रदृष्टः परो धर्मः स्थितो गार्हस्थ्यमाश्रितः || स्वधर्मं चर धर्मज्ञ यथाशास्त्रं यथाविधि | न हि गार्हस्थ्यमुत्सृज्य तवारण्य विधीयते || गृहस्थं हि सदा देवाः पितरोऽतिथयस्तथा | भृत्याश्चैवोपजीवन्ति तान्भरस्व महीपते || वयांसि पशवश्चैव भूतानि च जनाधिप | गृहस्थैरेव धार्यन्ते तस्माच्छ्रेष्ठो गृहाश्रमी || वेदज्ञानं च ते कृत्स्नं तपश्चावर्गिनं महत्| पितृपैतामहं धुर्यवद्वोढुमर्हसि || एष धर्मः क्षत्रियाणां प्रजानां परिपालयन् | उत्पथोऽन्यो महाराज मा स्म शोके मनः कृथाः || भ्रातुरस्य हितं वाक्यं श्रुणु धर्मज्ञ सत्तम | दण्ड एव हि राजेन्द्र क्षत्रधर्मो न मुण्डनम्||'.

Yudhishthira remained quiet listening to these words spoken by *Vyasa,* who continues reiterating that he should rule the lands like *Yayati* and *Nahusha* with his brothers in happiness having already lived earlier in forests. Having enjoyed the worlds according to one righteousness, desires and enterprise, only thereafter think of going to the forests 'प्रशाधी पृथिवीं पार्था ययातिरिव नाहुषः || अरण्ये दुःखवसतिरनुभूता तपस्विभिः || दुःखस्यान्ते नरव्याघ्र सुखान्यनुभवन्तु वै || धर्ममर्थं च कामं च सह भारत | अनुभूय ततः पश्चात्प्रस्थातासि विशाम्पते ||'. No does one get back what was lost either by performing actions or by worrying over it. There is also no one who can granmt him what was lost by him. It is only by *divine intent* and *Will* that one gets at the proper time. Accoring to time, the winds blow, the rains fall, lotus blooms in water, trees blossom in forests, dy breaksabd night falls, moon grows in fullness. At impropertime, neither tress give fruits not streams flowin abundance. Neither is one born nor does he die at improper time, nor does he become aduolasent or a young man, even as seed sown at omproper time does not give any grain 'न कर्मणा लभ्यते चिन्तया वा नाप्यस्ति दाता पुरुषस्य कश्चित्| पर्याययोगाद् विहितं विधाता कालेन सर्वं लभते मनुष्यः ||..कालेन शीघ्रां प्रवहन्ति वाताः कालेन वृष्टिर्जलदानुपैति | कालेन पद्मोत्पलवज्जलं च कालेन पुष्यन्ति वनेषु वृक्षाः || कालेन कृष्णाश्च सिताश्च रात्रयः कालेन चन्द्रः परिपूर्णबिम्बः | नकालतः पुष्पफलं द्रुमाणा नाकालवेगाः सरितो वहन्ति ||'.

Happiness comes after suffering, suffering after happiness, neither happiness nor suffering remaining for all the time. Therefore one who desires contentment for all the times should give both happiness and suffering. Happiness and sufferings, creation and destruction, gain and loss, life and death come to every one. Therefore a man of wisdom does neither elated nor discouraged with these. The person well-enlightened by scriptures rules his kingdom in proper manner, according to classification of the attributes and one's own righteous duties, only he becomes happy in the world of gods 'सुखस्यान्तरं दुःखं दुःखस्यान्तरं सुखम्| न नित्यं लभते दुःखं न नित्यं लभते सुखम्|| सुखमेव हि दुःखान्तं कदाचित् दुःखतः सुखम्| तस्मादेतद् द्वय जह्यादय इच्छेच्छाश्वतं सुखम्||...सुखं च दुःखं च भवाभवौ च लाभालाभौ मरणं जीवितं च | पर्यायतः सर्वमावाप्नुवन्ति तस्माद्धीरो नैव हृष्येन्न शोचेत्||...सम्यग्वेदान्प्राप्य शास्त्राण्यधीत्य सम्यग्राज्यं पालयित्वा च राजा | चतुर्वर्ण्यं स्थापयित्वा स्वधर्मे पूतात्मा वै मोदते देवलोके ||'.

Yudhishthira remained quiet listening to these wordts spoken by *Vyasa,* who continues reiterating that it is unbecoming of him to worry over what has transpired, since it is difficult assign the cause for the massacre. It could be the supreme Lord, the human being, the intransient behaviour of the massacred or the fate of the person who was massacred. If initiated by the supreme Lord one performs good or bad works then the responsibility should be assigned to the supreme Lord alone. Since it is not proper to assign responsibility for those who have not caused it, it would be prudent that Lord alone is the initiator of all activities. Therefore do not lament unnecessarily, recalling the क्षत्रधर्म knowing the warriors have also died performing their own क्षत्रधर्म. *Kauravas* were greedy of possessions and prosperity as ruler to have hegemony over the whole world and were destined to come under *Death's* sway and be destroyed by *Time*. Neither you, nor *Bhima*, nor *Arjuna* nor *Nakuala-Sahadeva* were their killers, *Time* alone being the one who gives life and death. *Time* has neither father nor mother nor does he favour any one particular. People are witness to *Time* and by *Time* alone are they exterminated. *Time* uses living beings to destroy other living beings. *Time* has made this war the instrument of exterminating creatures, that being its resplendent form - 'ईश्वरो वा भवेत्कर्ता पुरुषो वापि भारत | हठो वा वर्तते लोके कर्मजं वा फलं स्मृतम्|| ईश्वरेण नियुक्तो हि साध्वसाधु च भारत | कुरुते पुरुषः कर्म फलमीश्वरगामि तत्||...न चेन्निर्दिष्ट कौन्तेय यदन्येन कृत फलम्| प्राप्नुयादिति यस्माच्च ईश्वरे तन्निवेश ||...मा विषादं कृथा राजन्क्षत्रधर्ममनुस्मरन्| स्वधर्मेण हता ह्येते क्षत्रियाः क्षत्रियर्षभ || काङ्क्षमाणाः श्रियं कृत्स्नां पृथिव्यां च महद्यशः | कृतान्तविधिसंयुक्ताः कालेन निधनं गताः || न त्वं

हन्ता न भीमोऽयं नार्जुनो न यमावपि | कालः पर्यायधर्मेण प्राणानादत्त देहिनाम्|| न तस्य मातापितरौ नानुग्राह्यो हि कश्चन | कर्मसाक्षी प्रजानां यस्तेन कालेन संहृताः || हेतुमात्रमिदं तस्य विहितं भरतर्षभ | यद्धन्ति भूतैर्भूतानि तदस्मै रूपमैश्वरम्||'.

In ancient times, *devas* defeated *asuras* who caused decline of righteousness, even so *Kauravas* were eliminated. If doing so one revives his entire family, by eliminating family saves the nation, then that would neither be destruction of nobility nor of righteousness. Sometimes unrighteousness takes the garb of righteousness and righteousness takes the garb of unrighteousness. Only a man of discrimination is able to distinguish between the two. *Yudhishthira* is wise in *vedic* wisdom and have listened to the worlds of noble people; therefore he should restrain his emotions and not allow his mind to be disturbed by sorrow. He has traversed the same path which the gods did in earlier times 'इदं तु श्रूयते पार्थ युद्धं देवासुरं पुरा | असुरा भ्रातरो ज्येष्ठा देवाश्चापि यवीयसः | तेषामपि श्रीनिमित्तं महानासीत्समुच्छ्रयः | युद्धं वर्षसहस्राणि द्वात्रिंशदभवत्किल ||..जघ्नुर्दैत्यांस्तथा देवास्त्रिदिवं चाभिलेभिरे ||..धर्मव्युच्छित्तिमिच्छन्तो येऽधर्मस्य प्रवर्तकाः | हन्तव्यास्ते दुरात्मानो देवैर्दैत्या इवोल्बणाः || एकं हत्वा यदि कुले शिष्टानां स्यादनामयम्| कुलं हत्वा च राष्ट्रं च न तद्वृत्तोपघातकम्|| अधर्मरूपो धर्मो हि कश्चिदस्ति नराधिप | धर्मश्चाधर्मरूपोऽस्ति तच्च ज्ञेयं विपश्चिता || तस्मात्संस्तम्भयात्मानं श्रुतवानसि पाण्डव | देवैः पूर्वगतं मार्गमनुयातोऽसि भारत ||'.

Finally *Krishna* intervenes telling him to give up sorrow since it dries up man's vigour. Brave warriors have died in a battle and they cannot be called back. Even as wealth gained in sleep is seen as illusory and unattainable, even so those who die cannot be seen or called back again. They died bravely as they fought, they were not killed when they were running from the battle field. *Yudhishthira* and any one here will surely die one day. Therefore, why should one worry about the inevitable? Earlier even great kings, supreme in eminence and wealth, far richer than what even he possessed, have died, then why should one lament the death of sons. Even as good medicine does not work on one who is dead, even so his words do not seem to have no effect on *Yudhishthira* - 'मा कृथाः पुरुषव्याघ्र शोकं त्वं गात्रशोषणम्| न हि ते सुलभा भूयो ये हतास्मिन्रणाजिरे || स्वप्नलब्धा यथा लाभा वितथाः प्रतिबोधने | एवं ते क्षत्रिया राजन् ये व्यतीता महारणे || सर्वेऽप्यभिमुखा शूरा विजिता रणशोभिनः | नैषां कश्चित्पृष्ठतो वा पलायन्वापि पातितः ||..सुरत्रदुःस्त्रेऽहं त्वं च प्रजाः सर्वाश्च सृंजय | अविमुक्ता मरिष्यामस्तत्र का परिदेवना ||..स चेन्ममार सृंजय चतुर्भद्रतरस्त्वया | पुत्रात्पुण्यतरश्चैव मा पुत्रमनुतप्यथाः || किं वा तूष्णीं ध्यायसे सृंजयत्वं न मे राजन्वाचमिमां शृणोषि | न चेन्मोघं विप्रलप्तं ममेदं पथ्यं मुमूर्षोरिव सुप्रयुक्तम् ||'.

Then in what may be considered as a remarkable statesmanship, *Vyasa* advises *Yudhishthira* to go with his brothers to all those states or regions whose rulers were defeated and install them again on their thrones and if they are killed in the war then install their brothers or sons or if there be no son, then let the daughter be crowned on the thrones left vacant. If they are not adults or still in wombs, *Pandavas* should administer the region as regent in the intervening time. In this manner rule the lands even as *Indra* did in ancient times. Only thereafter he should perform *Ashvamedha* sacrifice 'सेयं त्वामनुसम्प्राप्ता विक्रमेण वसुन्धरा | निर्जिताश्च महीपाला विक्रमेण त्वयानघ || तेषां पुराणि राष्ट्राणि गत्वा राजन्सुहृद्वृत्तः | भ्रातॄन् पुत्रांश्च पौत्रांश्च स्वे स्वे राज्येऽभिषेचय || बालानपि च गर्भस्थान्सान्त्वेन समुदाचरन्| रञ्जयन्प्रकृतीः सर्वाः परिपाहि वसुन्धराम्|| कुमारो नास्ति येषां च कन्यास्तत्राभिषेचयत्| कामाशयो हि स्त्रिवर्गः शोकमेवं प्रहास्यसि || एवमाशासनं कृत्वा सर्वराष्ट्रेषु भारत | यजस्व वाजिमेधेन यथेन्द्रो विजयी पुरा ||'.

This was the benevolent polity and political system that prevailed during the closing period of *Dvapara*. *Iravati Karve* in her remarkable analysis charters these times in her book *Yuganta*, '*Mahabharata is very explicit about the structure of the Kshatriya society and the strict code of behaviour of the many clans with respect to one another, who were all related and who ruled over the whole of the Gangetic plain. (They) were all ruled by hereditary kings for generations. When Yadavas founded the new capital in Dvaraka, they do not seem to have wrested it from any reigning king. Many battles and conquests are described, but there is not a single mention of any king being deprived by another of his kingdom*'.

Yudhishthira represents as one who has great faith in one's own righteousness and wisdom, and tends to look the opinion of others with skepticism if not with suspicion. Earlier even *Krishna's* words did not convince him but now repeating *Vyasa's* advice, *Krishna* again tells him that his brothers and the kingdom is waiting for his reply and for their pleasure and to please *Draupadi*, he should give up his grief and rule the lands 'ततस्त्वं नृपतिश्रेष्ठं चतुर्वर्ण्यहितेप्सया | पुनरह महाबाहुर्यदुश्रेष्ठो महामतिः || नेदानीमतिनिर्बन्धं शोके त्वं कर्तुमर्हसि | यदाह

भगवान्व्यासस्तत्कुरुष्व नृपोत्तम ||..हताशिष्टाश्च राजानः कृत्नं चैव समागतम्| चातुर्वर्ण्यं महागज गष्ट्रं ते कुगजाङ्गलम्|| प्रियार्थमपि चैनेषां व्राम्मणानां महात्मनाम्| नियोगादस्य च गुगेर्व्यासस्यामिततेजसः || सुहदामस्मदादीनां द्रौपद्याऽच्च परंतप | कुरु प्रियामर्मित्रघ्न लोकस्य च हितं कुरु ||'. Finally *Yudhishthira* reconciles and accepts the unanimous advise 'एवमुक्तः स कृष्णेन गजा गजीवलोचनः | हितार्थं मर्वलोकस्य समुत्तस्थौ महात्मनाः ||'.

The *Pandavas* do according to *Vyasa's* advise and fulfilling that part, only then they go to different regions and kings to bring tributes from the various rulers it was as a mark of their accepting as a *samrat*, not as supreme but senior among the equals. Even earlier it was this spacious view that made even *Duryodhana*, *Dushasana* and *Shishupala* accept willingly the invitation to participate their earlier *Rajasuya* sacrifice. Only *Shishupala* had dissented not so much to consider *Yudhishthira* a चक्रवर्ती as it was his enmity towards Krishna for being given the principal honour, calling him not a ruler but only cowherd. *Krishna* himself was conscious of this *Kshatraiya* code. Zealously protecting it and vehemently opposing *Kamsa* since he had usurped his father's throne against the norms, getting *Jarsandha* hilled for having imprisoned many kings to offer them as oblation in a sacrifice. At the same time he had refused to be the ruler after *Kamsa's* death, placing his grand-father *Ugrasena* on the throne, even as he made *Balarama* the ruler of *Dvaraka*, when *Paundraka* or *Shrugal* were killed their sons were installed on their thrones, even as *Sahadeva* became the ruler when *Jarasandha* was killed by *Bhima*. Therefore, *Vyasa's* concluding remarks to *Yudhishthira* should be looked from this perspective.

Yudhishthira thereafter enters *Hastinapura*, along with *Dhritarashtra*, *Gandhari*, *Kunti* and his brothers, even as thousands of the residents of the city welcome them with great pleasure and enthusiasm. *Brahmins* shower blessings wishing health, wealth and prosperity. Then suddenly a *rakshasa* named *Charvaka* - चार्वाको गक्षगः, great teacher of materialistic and hedonistic philosophies, friend and well wisher of *Duryodhana*, mingles with the *Brahmins* suitably dressed as one - ब्राह्मणछद्मा, wishing ill of the *Pandavas*- 'तत्र दुर्योधनसग्त्रा भिक्षुरूपेण संवृतः | साक्षः शिग्वीत्रिदण्डी च धृष्टो विगतसाध्वसः ||'. Even as other *Brahmins* were preventing him, *Charvaka* speaks derisively to *Yudhishthira* calling him an evil king, a murder of his kith and kin. Fie on such one, who should seek to live such a life when it would have been better if he who caused death of his teacher, would be dead and not living 'धिग् भवन्त कुनृपतिं ज्ञातिघातिनमस्तु वै || किं तेन स्याद्धि कौन्तेय कृत्वेमं ज्ञातिसंक्षयम्| घातयित्वा गुरूंश्चैव मृतं श्रेयं न जीवितुम्||'.

The assembled *Brahmins* became ashamed and indignant and reject the words spoken by *Charvaka* saying that he does not represent them and assure *Yudhishthira* their support 'ऊचुर्नैतद्वचोऽस्माकं श्रीरस्तु तव पार्थिव'. Recognizing him as one who had come to harm *Yudhishthira* - 'एष दुर्योधनसग्त्रा चार्वाको नाम गक्षसः | परिव्राजकरूपेण हितं तस्य चिकीर्षति || वयं ब्रूमो न धर्मात्मान्व्येतु ते भयामीदृशम्| उपतिष्ठतु कल्याण भवन्त भातृभिः सह ||'. they admonish and destroy him with their spiritual power 'ततस्ते ब्राह्मणाः सर्वे हुंकारैः क्रोधमूर्छिताः | निर्भर्त्सयन्तः शुचयो निजघ्नुः पापराक्षसम्|| सप पात विनिर्दग्धस्तेजसा ब्रह्मवादिनम्| महेन्द्राशनिनिर्दग्धः पापदोऽङ्कुरवानिव ||'.

Chapter XVI

After *Charvaka* was killed all impediments were brushed aside and *Yudhishthira* entered *Hastinapur* with pomp and approbation. Soon thereafter, he was crowned the King of the kingdom, in the presence of *Krishna*, *Satyaki*, *Dhritarashtra*, *Vidura*, *Yuyustsu*, *Sanjaya* and others. *Krishna* anoints him with water poured from his divine conch. *Yudhishthira* thanks all for the confidence placed in him which would be the source of his strength. Though he is crowned the king, he declares that *Dhritarashtra* as the fatherly figure was the lord of the lands and *Pandavas* subservient to him offer the same respect as they did earlier. Having exterminated his sons, *Yudhishthira* now lives for his sake, ceaselessly serving all his needs. 'धृतराष्ट्रो महाराजः पिता मे दैवतं परम्| शासनेऽस्य प्रिये चैव स्थेयं मत्प्रियकांक्षिभिः || एतदर्थं हि जीवामि कृत्वा ज्ञातिवधं महत्| अस्य शुश्रूषणं कार्यं मया नित्यमतन्द्रिणा || यदि चाहमनुग्राह्यो भवतां सुहृदां तथा | धृतराष्ट्रे यथापूर्वं वृत्तिं वर्तितुमर्हथ || एष नाथो पृथिवीं कृत्स्ना पाण्डवाः सर्व एव च || एतन्मनसि कर्तव्यं भवद्भिर्वचनं मम |'.

Thereafter, he appoints *Vidura* as his chief advisor and *Sanjaya* as the chief administrator. *Nakula* is appointed in charge of the army, *Arjuna* being charged to restrain the enemies and punish the evil ones. *Bhima* was appointed to look after religious duties and *Dhaumya* being appointed as the principal priest. *Sahadeva* was asked to remain by his side. In addition, *Vidura*, *Sanjaya* and *Yuyutsu* are charged to be in attendance on *Dhritarashtra* to meet all his requirements. Then he approaches *Krishna* with all deference and requests him to take his own seat, saying that with his grace, compassion and strength alone they have gained their kingdom, - 'तव कृष्ण प्रसादेन नयेन च बलेन च | बुद्ध्या च नरशार्दूल तथा विक्रमणेन च || पुनः प्राप्तमिदं राज्यं पितृपैतामहं मया | नमस्ते पुण्डरीकाक्ष पुनः पुनररिंदम ||..विश्वकर्मन्नमस्तेस्तु विश्वात्मन्विश्वसंभव | विष्णो जिष्णो हरे कृष्ण वैकुण्ठ पुरुषोत्तम ||.. योनिस्त्वमस्य प्रलयश्च कृष्ण त्वमेवेदं सृजसे विश्वमग्रे | विश्वं चेदं त्वद्वशे विश्वयोने नमोऽस्तु ते शाङ्र्गचक्रासिपाणे ||. Thus eulogized, *Krishna* congratulates him 'एवं स्तुतो धर्मराजेन कृष्णः सभामध्ये प्रीतिमान्पुष्कराक्षः | तमभ्यनन्दद्भारतं पुष्कलाभिर्वाग्भिर्ज्येष्ठं पाण्डवं यादवाग्र्यः ||.

Once the coronation ceremonies were over, *Yudhishthira* observes that *Krishna* was absorbed in thought. When asked *Krishna* replies that his mind at that moment was centred on *Bhishma*, lying on the bed of arrows, effulgent like a flame in ashes, surrendering to him his mind and intellect. He advises *Yudhishthira* to approach *Bhishma* posthaste with reverence and seek his final counsels for his problems, for the great *Kuru* luminary would soon set in eternity - 'शरतल्पगतो भीष्मः शाम्यन्निव हुताशनः | मां ध्याति पुरुषव्याघ्रस्ततो मे तद्गतं मनः ||..एकीकृत्येन्द्रियग्रामं मनः संयम्य मेधया | शरणं मामुपागच्छत्ततो मे तद्गतं मनः ||...तस्मिन् हि पुरुषव्याघ्रे कर्मभिः स्वैर्दिवं गते | भविष्यति मही पार्थ नष्टचन्द्रेव शर्वरी ||..तद्युधिष्ठिर गाङ्गेयं भीष्मं भीमपराक्रमम्| अभिगम्योपसंगृह्य पृच्छ यत्ते मनोगतम्||...तस्मिन्नस्तमिते भीष्मे कौरवाणां धुरंधरे | ज्ञानान्यस्तं गमिष्यन्ति तस्मात्त्वां चोदयाम्यहम्||'.

Yudhishthira agrees the suggestion saying that there could be no two opinions to accept since he is the creator of the worlds; he knows what is best for them. Besides since the Sun is fast traversing to the northern horizon and *Bhishma* will be blessed with his beneficial presence as the mutable and immutable origin of divine effulgence 'भवांश्च कर्ता लोकानां यद्ब्रवीत्यरिसूदन | तथा तदनभिध्येयं वाक्यं यादवनन्दन ||..आवृत्ते भगवत्यर्के स हि लोकान्गमिष्यति | त्वद्दर्शनं महाबाहो तस्मादर्हति कौरवः || तव चाद्यस्य देवस्य क्षरस्यैवाक्षरस्य च | दर्शनं त्वस्य लाभः स्यात्त्वं हि ब्रह्ममयो निधिः ||'. Then lead by *Krishna* he goes to *Bhisma* shining like Sun and reciting *Krishna's* innumerable names with concentrated mind and intellect in the company of great seers like *Vyasa*, *Narada* and other sages 'चिकीर्णांशुरिवादित्यो भीष्मः शरशतैश्चितः | शुशुभे परया लक्ष्म्या वृतो ब्राह्मणसत्तमैः ||'. Then seeing *Krishna* approach him he offered his obeisance lying down, 'स्वरेण हृष्टपुष्टेन तुष्टाव मधुसूदनम्|| योगेश्वरं पद्मनाभं विष्णुं जिष्णुं जगत्पतीम्| कृताञ्जलिपुटो भूत्वा वाग्विदां प्रवरः प्रभुः भीष्मः परमधर्मात्मा वसुदेवमथाब्रुवन्..|| मनो ब्रह्मण्यदेवाय गोब्राह्मणहिताय च | जगद्धिताय कृष्णाय गोविन्दाय नमो नमः ||..यथा विष्णुमयं सत्यं यथा विष्णुमयं जगत्| यथा विष्णुमयं सर्वं पाप्मा मे नश्यतां तथा ||..नारायणः परं ब्रह्म नारायणपरं तपः | नारायणः परो देवः सर्वं नारायणः सदा ||'.

Offering obeisance to *Vyasa* and other sages and bowing to *Bhishma Krishna*, *Satyaki* and *Pandavas* sit around him 'अभिवाद्य तु गोविन्दः सात्यकिस्ते च पार्थिवाः | व्यासादीनृषिमुख्यांश्च गाङ्गेयमुपतस्थिरे || ततो वृद्धं तथा दृष्ट्वा गाङ्गेयं

यदुकौरवाः | परिवार्य ततः सर्वे निषेदुः पुरुषर्षभाः ||'. Seeing him thus lying, *Krishna* softly inquires whether he has all his senses well restrained and the arrows are not causing excessive pain - 'कच्चिज्ज्ञानानि सर्वाणि प्रसन्नानि यथा पुरा | कच्चिन्न व्याकुला चैव बुद्धिस्ते वदतां वर ||'. Continuing he says that he is aware that as a man of wisdom, no one else equal to him seen in the world. Therefore, he should remove any sorrow that he may be having about *Pandavas* due to the destruction of the family members. Since he is repository of all wisdom spiritual as well as temporal relating to the different aspects of life, he should now remove the ignorance and doubts which have engulfed *Pandavas*, 'स त्वं भीष्म महाबाहो वसूनां वासवोपमः | नित्यं विप्रैः समाख्यातो नवमोऽनवमो गुणैः || अहं च त्वाभिजानामि नाम्त्वं पुरुषसत्तम | त्रिदशेष्वपि विख्यातस्त्वं शक्त्या पुरुषोत्तम || मनुष्येषु मनुष्येन्द्र न दृष्टो न च मे श्रुतः | भवतो वा गुणैर्युक्तः पृथिव्यां पुरुषः क्वचित्|| ..तदस्य तप्यमानस्य ज्ञातीनां संक्षयेन वै || ज्येष्ठस्य पाण्डुपुत्रस्य शोकं भीष्म व्यपानुद || ये हि धर्माः समाख्याताश्चातुर्वर्ण्यस्य भारत ||..योगे सांख्ये च नियता ये च धर्माः सनातनाः |..प्रतिलोमप्रसूतानां वर्णानां चैव यः स्मृतः || देशजातिकुलानां न जानिषे धर्मलक्षणम्| वेदोक्तो यश्च शिष्टोक्तः सदैव विदितस्तव ||..धर्मशास्त्रं च सकलं नित्यं मनसि ते स्थितम्|| ये च केचन लोकेऽस्मिन्नर्थाः संशयकारकाः | तेषां छेत्ता नास्ति लोके त्वदन्यः पुरुषर्षभ || स पाण्डवेयस्य मनःसमुत्थितं नरेन्द्र शोकं व्यपकर्ष मेधया | भवद्विधा ह्युत्तमबुद्धिविस्तरा विमुह्यमानस्य नरस्य शान्तये ||'.

Hearing *Krishna's* voice near him, *Bhishma* opened his and bowing with both his hands, slightly raising his head. He said that he was happy to see with admiration and amazement his eternal form, as the creator and destroyer, pervading heaven and earth and the seven spheres as well. On the top of his head was the luminous heaven and below is the mother earth, quarters are his shoulders and Sun and Moon are his eyes, *Shukra* being his vigour. Having been in communion with him, he has already surrendered to him hoping to reach the supreme goal · 'नमस्ते भगवन्कृष्ण लोकानां प्रभवाप्यय | त्वं हि कर्ता हृषीकेश संहर्ता चापराजितः ||.. तच्च पश्यामि गोविन्द यत्तं रूपं सनातनम्| सप्त मार्गा निरुद्धास्ते वायोरमिततेजसः || दिवं ते शिरसा व्याप्तं पद्भ्यां देवी वसुन्धरा | दिशो भुजा रविश्चक्षुर्वीर्ये शुक्रः प्रतिष्ठितः ||..त्वत्प्रपन्नाय भक्ताय गतिमिष्टां जिगीषवे | यच्छ्रेयः पुण्डरीकाक्ष तद्ध्यायस्व सुरोत्तम ||'.

Hearing these laudatory words, *Krishna* tells him those who are not his devotees or those who being devoted are not upright in their dealings having no serenity in mind, are never so enlightened. *Bhishma* having restrained his senses and being austere is qualified to be enlightened and having only sixty five days for his deliverance to his original place, he prevails him to counsel *Yudhishthira* who is despondent not having proper wisdom 'यतः खलु परा भक्तिर्मयि ते पुरुषर्षभ | ततो मया वपुर्दिव्यं त्वयी राजन्प्रदर्शितम्|| न ह्यभक्ताय राजेन्द्र भक्तायानृजवे न च | दर्शयाम्यहमात्मानं न चाशान्ताय भारत || भवांस्तु मम भक्तश्च नित्यं चार्जवमास्थितः | दमे तपसि सत्ये च दाने च निरतः शुचिः || अर्हस्त्वं भीष्म मां द्रष्टुं तपसा स्वेन पार्थिव | तव ह्युपस्थिता लोका येभ्यो नावर्तते पुनः || पञ्चाशतं षट् च कुरुप्रवीर शेषं दिनानां तव जीवितस्य | ततः शुभैः कर्मफलोदयैस्त्वं समेष्यसे भीष्म विमुच्य देहम्||..तज्ज्ञातिशोकोपहतश्रुताय सत्याभिसंधाय युधिष्ठिराय | प्रब्रूहि धर्मार्थ समाधियुक्तं सत्यं वचोऽस्यापनुदाशु शोकम् ||'.

Bhishma is overwhelmed by *Krishna's* request says that what can he say when every thing that can be spoken is established in *Krishna* himself. He who becomes bold to speak about the worlds which are near *Indra* only that one can speak about righteousness, enterprise, desires and deliverance. But being weak by pain caused by the arrows he should be excused because he has no strength to talk and at that moment he is neither aware of the directions nor of earth and the sky above. Besides who else can venture to instruct *Yudhishthira* when he has a teacher like *Krishna* himself 'किं त्वहमभिधास्यामि वाक्यं ते तव सन्निधौ | यदा वाचोगतं सर्वं तव वाचि समाहितम्|| यच्च किंचित्क्वचिल्लोके कर्तव्यं क्रियते च यत्| त्वत्तस्तन्निःसृतं देव लोके बुद्धिमतो हि ते || शरामितापद् व्यथितं मनो मे मधुसूदन | गात्राणि चावसीदन्ति न च बुद्धिः प्रसीदति || न च मे प्रतिभा काचिदस्ति किंचित्प्रभाषितुम्| पीड्यमानस्य गोविन्द विषानलसमैः शरैः || कथं त्वयि स्थिते कृष्णे शाश्वते लोककर्तरि | प्रब्रूयान्मद्विधः कश्चिद्गुरौ शिष्य इव स्थिते ||'. *Krishna* was not one to allow him so easily to withdraw. Therefore, he assures him that his pain will be reduced during the period of his communication and he will neither be obscure nor confused, neither by heat nor by thirst. All avenues of *wisdom* will be revealed to him and his intelligence will not stand diminished, with his mind becoming calm and collected - 'यच्च मामात्थ गाङ्गेय बाणघातरुजं प्रति | गृहाणात्र वरं भीष्म मत्प्रसादकृतं प्रभो || न ते ग्लानिर्न ते मूर्छा न दाहो न च ते रुजा | प्रभविष्यन्ति गाङ्गेय क्षुत्पिपासे न चाप्युतः || ज्ञानानि च समग्राणि प्रतिभास्यन्ति तेऽनघ | न च ते क्वचिदासक्तिर्बुद्धेः प्रादुर्भविष्यति || सत्त्वस्थं च मनो नित्यं तव भीष्म भविष्यति | राजस्तमोभ्यां रहितं घनैर्मुक्तं इवोडुराट्|| संसरन्तं प्राजाजालं संयुक्तो ज्ञानचक्षुषा | भीष्म द्रक्ष्यसि तत्त्वेन जले मीन इवामले ||'. *Narada* too advises *Pandavas* to take this opportunity to get their doubts resolved from *Bhishma* since he is fast sinking like the Sun on the western horizon, 'प्राप्तकालं समाचक्षे भीष्मोऽयमनुयुज्यताम्| अस्तमेति हि गाङ्गेयो भानुमानिव भारत || अयं प्राणानुत्सिसृक्षुस्त्वं सर्वेऽभ्यनुपृच्छत | कृत्स्नान्हि विधिवान्धर्मांश्चातुर्वर्ण्यस्य वेत्त्ययम्|| एष वृद्धः परांल्लोकान्सम्प्राप्नोति तनुं त्यजन्| तंशीघ्रमनुयुञ्जीध्वं संशयान्मनसि स्थितान्||'.

Then they all came to their grandsire but none of them were bold enough to ask questions, *Yudhishthira* admitting that no one but *Krishna* being competent to ask him questions -'एवमुक्ते नाग्दंन भसिष्ममीयुर्नराधिपाः | प्रष्टुं वाशक्नुवन्तस्ते वीक्षांचक्रुः परस्परम् || अथोवाच हृषीकेशं पाण्डुपुत्रो युधिष्ठिरः | नान्यस्तु देवकीपुत्राच्छक्तः प्रष्टुं पितामहम्||'. *Krishna* approaches *Bhishma* inquiring whether his mind is now composed for wisdom to shine with clarity, without any obscurity in mind and heart 'कच्चित्सुखेन रजनी व्यष्टा ते राजसत्तम | विस्पष्टलक्षणा बुद्धिः कच्चिच्चोपस्थिता तव || कच्चिज्ज्ञानानि सर्वाणि पतिभान्ति च तेनघ | न ग्लायते च हृदयं न च विद्यते व्याकुलं मनः ||'. *Bhishma* replies *Krishna* that by his grace bodily pain, delusion of mind, fatigue, indecision, and timidity have all disappeared enabling him to see past, present and the future clearly, like fruit in one's hand. Wisdom contained in *vedic* scriptures, is explicit even so is धर्म according to persons, places and periods. Therefore, whatever they need to know will all be communicated to them. Yet he wonders that though by his grace his energy is revived, a doubt rankles in his mind why *Krishna* himself did not communicate the wisdom to them 'दाहो मोहः श्रमश्चैव क्लमो ग्लानिस्तथा रुजा | तव प्रसादाद्वार्ष्णेय सद्यः प्रतिगातानि मे || यच्च भूतं भविष्यच्च भवच्च परमद्युने | तत्सर्वमनुपश्यामि पाणौ फलमिवार्पितम्|| वेदोक्तश्चैव ये धर्मा वेदान्ताधिगताश्च ये | तान्सर्वान्सम्प्रपश्यामि वरदानात्तवाच्युत ||..यच्च तत्र च वक्तव्यं यद्वक्ष्यामि जनार्दन | तव प्रसादाद्धि शुभा मनो मे बुद्धिराविशत्|| युवेवास्मि समावृत्तस्त्वदनुध्यानबृंहितः | वक्तुं श्रेयः समर्थोऽस्मि त्वत्प्रसादाज्जनार्दन || स्वयं किमर्थं तु भवाञ्श्रेयो न प्राह पाण्डवम्| किं ते विवक्षितं चात्र तदाशु वद माधव स्वयं किमर्थं तु भवाञ्श्रेयो न प्राह पाण्डवम्| किं ते विविक्षितं चात्र तदाशु वद माधव ||'.

Krishna then in a great admission of his *intent* and *purpose* in the world, clarifies his role as custodian of the well-being and prosperity of his devotees. Therefore, though he is the origin of all glory and success, existence and non-existence, to enhance the greatness of his devotees he makes his extensive and comprehensive *wisdom* along with divine sight accessible to *Bhishma*, so that as long as the world is ruled by wise rulers the world will speak of *Bhishma's* wisdom and glory. 'यशसः श्रेयसश्चैव मूलं मां विद्धि कौरव | मत्तः सर्वेऽभिनिर्वृत्ता भावाः सदसदात्मकाः ||..आधेयं तु मया भूयो यशस्तव महाद्युते | ततो मे विपुला बुद्धिस्त्वयि भीष्म समर्पिता || यावद्धि पृथिवीपाल पृथ्वीयं स्थास्यति ध्रुवा | तावत्तवाक्षया कीर्तिर्लोकाननुचरिष्यति ||..एतस्मात्कारणाद्भीष्म मतिर्दिव्या मया हि ते | दत्ता यशो विप्रथयेत्कथं भूयस्तवेति ह || यावद्धि प्रथते लोके पुरुषस्य यशो भुवि | तावत्तस्याक्षयं स्थानं भवतीति विनिश्चिता ||'.

Listening to *Krishna's* words, an overwhelmed *Bhishma* exclaims joyously that he surely is the eternal *self* of all creatures. Let *Yudhsishthira* ask any questions and he will reply them all happily 'हन्त धर्मान्प्रवक्ष्यामि दृढे वाङ्मनसी मम | तव प्रसादात्गोविन्द भूतात्मा ह्यसि शाश्वतः || युधिष्ठिरस्तु धर्मात्मा मां धर्माननुपृच्छतु | एवं प्रीतो भविष्यामि धर्मान्वक्ष्यामि चाखिलान्||'. Then seeing *Yudhishthira* still hesitating to approach, *Krishna* remarks that he hesitates fearing that *Bhishma* may be still angry with him for having become the instrument for destruction of elders and teachers who deserved respect 'लज्जया परयोपेतो धर्मराजो युधिष्ठिरः |..लोकस्य कदनं कृत्वा लोकनाथो विशाम्पते |..पूज्यान्मान्यांश्च भक्तांश्च गुरून्सम्बन्धिबान्धवान्| अर्घार्हानिषुभिर्भित्वा भवन्तं नोपसर्पति ||. *Bhishma* smiles with compassionate glance saying that even as charity, study and austerity is enjoined on *Brahmins*, killing enemies and being killed by them on the battle field even if they be one's own relatives, is enjoined for *Kshatriyas.* Therefore, he need not worry to come in his presence, since he has now given up anger and is peaceful in mind. - 'ब्राह्मणानां यथा धर्मो दानध्ययनं तपः | क्षत्रियाणां तथा कृष्ण समरे देहपातनम्||..मां पृच्छ तात विश्रब्धं मा भैस्त्वं कुरुसत्तम || समयत्यागिनो लुब्धान्गुरूनपि च केशवः | निहन्ति समरे पापान् क्षत्रियो यः स धर्मवित्||'. Then *Yudhishthira* holds his feet and in return *Bhisma* lovingly welcomed him.

After acknowledging *Krishna* as the source of entire wisdom 'नमो धर्माय महते नमः कृष्णाय वेधसे | ब्राह्मणेभ्यो नमस्कृत्य धर्मान्वक्ष्यामि शाश्वतान्|| श्रृणु कार्त्स्न्येन मत्तस्त्वं राजधर्मान्युधिष्ठिर | निरुच्यमानान्नियतो यच्चान्यदपि वाञ्छसि ||', *Bhishma* thereafter communicates to *Yudhishthira* as requested by him, 'राज्ञां वै परमो धर्म इति धर्मविदो विदुः | महान्तमेतं भारं च मन्ये तद्ब्रूहि पार्थिव ||' राजधर्म (righteous actions for Kings) आपद्धर्म (righteous actions in time of distress), मोक्षधर्म (righteous actions for final deliverance) and दानधर्म (righteous actions for charity). But *Yudhishthira* remains unsatisfied and craves elucidation, even though he was conscious that grandfather's body is shattered and full of blood stains, his mind incoherent, all due to his fault. He feels that it would have been better if he too was killed on the battle field, instead of seeing *Bhishma* suffer in this manner 'शमो बहुविधाकारः सूक्ष्मः उक्तः पितामह | न च मे हृदये शान्तिरस्ति श्रुत्वेदमीदृशम्|| अस्मिन्नर्थे बहुविधा शान्तिरुक्ता पितामहः | स्वकृते का नु शान्तिः स्याच्छमाद्बहुविधादपि ||..अतः कष्टतरं किं नु मत्कृते यत् पितामहः | इमामवस्थां गमितः प्रत्यमित्रैः रणाजिरे || तथा चान्ये नृपतयः सहपुत्राः सबान्धवाः | मत्कृते निधनं प्राप्ताः किं नु कष्टतरं ततः ||..सोऽहं तव ह्यन्तकरः सुहृद्वधकरस्तथा | न शान्तिमधिगच्छामि पश्यंस्त्वां दुःखितं क्षितौ ||.. अहं हि समरे वीर गमितः शत्रुभिः क्षयम्| अभविष्यं यदि पुरा सह भ्रातृभिरच्युत || न त्वमेवं

सुदुःखार्तमद्रक्षं सायकार्दितम्||'.

Bhishma consoles him saying why should he hold himself responsible since he is dependent like others on the *divine will*, the course of one's actions being difficult to known by one senses, 'परतन्त्रं कथं हेतुमात्मानमनुपश्यसि | कर्मणां हि महाभाग सूक्ष्मं ह्येतदतीन्द्रियम्||'. He relates then a legend about the conversation between a serpent, hunter, *Death* and *Time* when a child bitten by the serpent dies. *Time* clarifies that no one of them were responsible for death, actions performed by the child alone have occasioned his death, 'न ह्यहं नाप्ययं मृत्युर्नायं लुब्धक पन्नगः | किल्बिषी जन्तुमरणे न वयं हि प्रयोजकाः || अकरोद्यदयं कर्म तन्नोऽर्जुनक चोदकम्| विनाशहेतुर्नान्योऽस्य वध्यतेऽयं स्वकर्मणा || यदानेन कृतं कर्म तेनायं निधनं गतः | विनाशहेतुः कर्मास्य सर्वे कर्मवशा वयम्||'. Therefore, *Yudhishthira* should not grieve for the death of his cousins, '...शमं गच्छ मा भूः शोकपरो नृप | स्वकर्मप्रत्ययाँल्लोकान्सर्वे गच्छन्ति वै नृपाः || नैव त्वया कृतं कर्म नापि दुर्योधनेन वै | कालेनैतत्कृतं विद्धि निहता येन पार्थिवाः ||'.

After *Bhishma* concludes his extended communication embracing all aspects to be known by a King, he recounts what *Shiva* told seers earlier about *Krishna's* eternal mystery, greater than that of *Brahma* and luminous like Sun in cloudless sky - 'पितामहादपि वरः शाश्वतः पुरुषो हरिः | कृष्णो जाम्बूनदाभासो व्यभ्रे सूर्य इवोदितः ||', who has taken human form to fulfill *divine intent* and *purpose* 'सुरकार्यार्थमुत्पन्नो मानुषं वपुरास्थितः |', with both *Brahma* and *Shiva* happily established within, 'तस्मा वसति गर्भस्थः शरीरे सुखसंस्थितः | शर्वः सुखं संश्रितश्च शरीरे सुखसंस्थितः || दृष्टे तस्मिन्नहं दृष्टो न मेऽत्रास्ति विचारणा | पितामहो वा देवेश इति वित्त तपोधनाः ||', the gods sheltered with splendour on his chest, along with *Sri Lakshmi* 'सर्वाः सुखं संश्रितास्च शरीरे तस्य देवताः | स देवः पुण्डरीकाक्षः श्रीगर्भः श्रीसहोषितः ||. Therefore, any one who desires to experience *Brahma* or *Shiva* can do by seeing *Krishna* 'यो हि मां द्रष्टुमिच्छेत ब्रह्माणं च पितामहम्| द्रष्टव्यस्तेन भगवान्वासुदेवः प्रतापवान्||'. He verily is *Vishnu*, verily is the resplendent शेष, supporter of the earth, verily is *Balarama* verily is and verily is also *Krishna*, the immutable with plough and discus respectively as weapons, 'य एव विष्णुः सोऽनन्तो भगवान्वसुधाधरः | यो रामः स हृषीकेशो योऽच्युतः स धराधरः || तावुभौ पुरुषव्याघ्रौ दिव्यौ दिव्यपराक्रमौ | द्रष्टव्यौ माननीयौ च चक्रलाङ्गलधारिणौ ||'. *Bhishma* says that when *Shiva* concludes his words, they resonate reverberating around, with clouds gathering, sky turning dark-blue, pleasant rains pouring, quarters becoming invisible, even as he disappears from their sight 'अथ व्योम्नि महाञ्शब्दः सविद्युत्स्तनयित्नुमान्| मेघैश्च गगनं नीलं संरुद्धमभवद्घनैः || प्रावृषीवच पर्जन्यो ववृषे निर्मलं पयः | तमश्चैवाभवद् घोरं दिशश्च न चकाशिरे || ततो देवगिरौ तस्मिन्रम्ये पुण्ये सनातने | नशर्व भूतसंघं वा ददृशुर्मुनयस्तदा ||'.

Bhishma tells *Yudhishthira* that warriors were slaughtered by *Time*, which is no one other than *Krishna* himself, the eternal chastiser 'कालेनायं जनः सर्वो निहतो रणमूर्धनि | वयं च कालेन हताः कालो हि परमेश्वरः || न हि कालेन कालज्ञ स्पृष्टः शोचितुमर्हसि | कालो लोहितरक्ताक्षः कृष्णो दण्डी सनातनः ||', And his entire success in war is entirely due to *Krishna* alone 'तव पार्थ जयः कृत्स्नस्तव कीर्तिस्तथातुला || तवेयं पृथिवीदेवी कृत्स्ना नारायणाश्रयात्| अयं नाथस्तवाचिन्त्यो यस्य नारायणो गतिः || स भवांस्त्वमुपाध्वर्यू रणाग्नौ हुतवान्नृपान्| कृष्णस्रुवेण महता युगान्ताग्नि समेन वै || दुर्योधनश्च शोच्योऽसौ सपुत्रभ्रातृबान्धवः | कृतवान्योऽबुधिः क्रोधाद्धरिगाण्डीवविग्रहम्|| दैतेया दानवेन्द्राश्च महाकाया महाबलाः | चक्राग्नौ क्षयमापन्ना दावाग्नौ शलभा इव ||'. Therefore, he should not grieve on this matter, 'तस्मात्कुन्तिसुत ज्ञातीन्नेह शोचितुमर्हसि |...धर्मोणापि सदा राजन्प्रजा रक्षितुमर्हसि | यस्तस्य विपुलो दण्डः सम्यग्धर्मः स कीर्त्यते ||'. After *Bhishma's* long oration, *Yudhishthira* lapses in silence even as other silently offer obeisance to Krishna 'एवं सम्भाषमाणे तु गाङ्गेये पुरुषर्षभे | तूर्ष्णीं वभूव कौरव्यो मध्ये तेषां महात्मनाम्|| तच्छ्रुत्वा विस्मय जग्मुर्धृतराष्ट्रादयो नृपाः | सम्पूज्य मनसा कृष्णं सर्वे प्राञ्जलयोऽभवन्||'.

Yudhishthira was, however, was not yet satisfied and therefore asks him as a final instruction what is that divine being who is the ultimate refuge, knowing whom and offering whom obeisance one becomes eternally blessed and which is the righteous of the righteous performance of action performing which a persons finally becomes delivered from *samsara* - 'किमेकं दैवतं लोके किं वाप्येकं परायणम्| स्तुवन्तः कं कमर्चन्तः प्राप्नुयुर्मानवाः शुभम्|| को धर्मः सर्वधर्माणां भवतः परमो मतः | किं जपन् मुच्यते जन्तुर्जन्मसंसारबन्धनात्||'. Then what *Bhishma* replies in return is the reiteration and recitation of the thousand names of *Sri Vishnu* - 'जगत्प्रभु देवदेवमनन्तम् पुरुषोत्तमम्| स्तुवन्नामसहस्रेण पुरुषः सततोत्थितः || तमेवचार्चयन्नित्यं भक्त्या पुरुषमव्ययम्| ध्यायन्स्तुवन्नमस्यंश्च यजमानस्तमेव च || अनादिनिधनं विष्णुं सर्वलोकमहेश्वरम्| लोकाध्यक्षं स्तुवन्नित्यं सर्वदुःखातिगोभवेत्|| ब्रह्मण्यं सर्वधर्मज्ञं लोकानां कीर्तिवर्धनम्| लोकनाथं महद् भूत सर्वदुःखाभवोद्भयम्|| ब्रह्मण्यं सर्वधमज्ञं लोकानां कीर्तिवर्धनम्| लोकनाथं महद्भूतं सर्वभूतभवेद्भवम्||'. Concluding all the thousand names Bhishma finally tells Yudhishthira that whoever listens to these auspicious names or reiterates them every day he will not face any adversity in this as well as in the subsequent worlds 'इतीदं कीर्तनीयस्य केशवस्य महात्मनः | नाम्नां सहस्रं दिव्यानामशेषेण प्रकीर्तितम्|| य इदं श्रुणयान्नित्यं यश्चापि परिकीर्तयेत्| नाशुभं प्राप्नुयात्किंचित् सोऽमुत्रेह च मानवः ||'.

After completing his extensive and comprehensive instruction on *Dharma* and other subjects, *Bhishma* lapsed in silence. Seeing him quiet *Vyasa* addressed him pointing out *Yudhishthira's* calm and composed disposition along withies brothers and *Krishna* and that he should permit them to go back to *Hastinaapura*. *Bhishma* gives his permission asking them to give their sorrow and perform their duties to the ancestors and their countrymen. Come again to him when the Sun traverses to the northern horizon. Thereafter, *Yudhishthira* placing *Dhritarashtra*, *Gandhari* and *Krishna* in the forefront left for *Hastinapur* along with his brothers and other family members.

When the time comes for *Bhishma* to leave his mortal coils, *Yudhishthira* comes to him with all the materials for along with his brothers, *Dhritarashtra, Vidura* and *Krishna*. They see *Bhishma* lying ready to leave his mortal coils. *Vyasa* was there with him along with *Narada, Devala* and other sages. *Yudhishthira* and others get down from their chariots and approach *Bhishma* and offer him and the sages their obeisance. Then *Yudhishthira* addresses *Bhishma* softly informing that he has come along with *Dhritarashtra, Krishna* and all those saved from the terrible war and the citizen of *Kurujhangal* as well - 'शयानं वीरशयनं ददर्शा नृपतिस्ततः | नथां रथावतीर्या भातृभिः मह धर्मराट्|| अभिवाद्याय कौन्तेयः पितामहर्मरिंदम | द्वैपायनादीर्नविप्रांश्च नैश्च प्रत्यभिनदितः ||...युधिष्ठिरोऽहं नृपते नमस्ते जाह्नवीसुत | श्रृणोषि चेन्महाबाहो ब्रूहि किं करवाणि मे ||..पुत्रश्च ते महातेजा धृतराष्ट्रो जनेश्वरः | उपस्थितः सहामात्यो वासुदेवश्च वीर्यवान्|| हतशिष्टाश्च राजानः सर्वे च कुरुजान्गलः | तान्पश्य नरशार्दूल समुन्मिलय लोचने ||'.

Bhishma opens his eyes gently and is pleased to see them all present. He commends *Yudhishthira* for having gained *Wisdom* and understood *the divine intent* and *purpose*. He tells him to give up his grief and rule his kingdom wisely and well. He has been lying in this bed of arrows for eighty one days but he feels as if he has been lying for hundred years. He should not lament any more, especially he has been informed of the divine intent purpose from *Vyasa*, - 'दिष्ट्या प्राप्तोऽस्मि कौन्तेय सहामात्यो युधिष्ठिर | परिवृत्तो हि भगवान्सहस्रांशुर्दिवाकरः || अष्टपञ्चाशतं रात्र्यं शयनस्याद्य मे गताः | शरेषु निशिताग्रेषु यथा वर्षशतं तथा || ..नशोचितव्यं कौरव्य भवितव्यंहि तत्तथा | श्रुतं देवरहस्यं ते कृष्णद्वैपायनादपि ||'. Then turning his gaze to *Krishna* he seeks his permission to leave his body, asking him to shower his grace on him for ever. 'त्रायस्व पुण्डरीकाक्ष पुरुषोत्तम नित्यशः | अनुजानीहि मां वैकुण्ठं पुरुषोत्तम || त्वां तु जानाम्यहं देवं पुराणमृषिसत्तमम् | नरेण सहितं देव बदर्यां सुचिरोषिताम्|| तथा मे नारदः प्राह व्यासश्च सुमहातपाः | नरनारायणावेतौ सम्भूतौ मनुजेष्विति || स मां त्वमनुजानीहि कृष्ण मोक्ष्ये कलेवरम्| त्वयाहं समनुज्ञातो गच्छेयं परमां गतीम्||'. *Krishna* graciously permits him to go back to *Vasus*, the deities presiding the quarters, saying that he has indeed not committed any demerits in life, having lived like *Markandeya* and *Death* waiting by his side like a servant for him to leave at *will*. 'अनुजानामि भीष्म त्वां वसून्प्राप्नुहि पार्थिव | न तेऽस्ति वृजिनं किंचिदिहलोके महाद्युते || पितृभक्तोऽसि राजर्षे मार्कण्डेय इवापरः | तेन मृत्युस्तव वशे स्थितो भृत्य इवानतः ||'. *Bhishma* then turns his face slightly towards his kith and kin and tells them now that he would be withdrawing his life from the body, they should live in righteous manner, since *Truth* alone is supreme - 'प्राणानुत्स्रष्टुमिच्छामि तत्रानुज्ञातुमर्हथ | सत्योषु यतितव्यं वः सॅयं हि परमं बलम्||'.

Saying thus he lapsed in to silence, having established his *self* in *primal Breath*. Then through *Yoga* even as he withdrew his self from each part of his body, the arrows stuck in those parts fell off from the body and with wounds filled the body became luminous thereafter, to the great astonishment of *Vyasa, Krishna* and all the assembled people. At that moment musical instruments, bugles and conches sounded from heavens and fragrant flowers begin falling with sages acclaiming *well done, well done*. Then *Bhishma's Primal Breath* breached the crown of his head and shot cross to merge in the vast expanse of the space. - 'इदमाश्चर्यमासाच्च मध्ये तेषां महात्मनम् | सहितै र्ऋषिभिः सर्वैस्तदा व्यासादिभिः प्रभो || यद्यन्मुञ्चति गात्रं हि स शान्तनुसुतस्तदा | तत्तद्विशल्यं भवति योगयुक्तस्य तस्य वै || क्षणेन प्रेक्षतां तेषां विशल्यः सोऽभवत्तदा | तद्दृष्ट्वा विस्मिताः सर्वे वासुदेवपुरोगमाः || सह तैर्मुनिभिः सर्वैस्तदा व्यासादिभिर्नृप | सन्निरुद्धस्तु तेनात्मा सर्वेष्वायतनेषु च || जगाम भित्वा मूर्धानं दिवमभ्युत्पपात ह | देवदुन्दुभिनादश्च पुष्पवर्षैः सहाभवत्|| सिद्धा ब्रह्मर्षयश्चैव साधु साध्विति हर्षिताः | महोल्केव च भीष्मस्य मूर्धदेशाज्जनाधिपः || निःसृत्याकाशमाविश्य क्षणेनान्तरधीयत | एवं स राजशार्दूल नृपः शान्तनवस्तदा || समयुज्यत कालेन भरतानां कुलोद्वहः ||'.

Thereafter *Vidura* together with *Pandavas* bring fragrant materials for the funeral pyre and then going around, they offer their respect to the deceased ancestor and a great human being. At that time, his mother, *Ganga* the river-goddess was seen flowing with restlessness mourning the passing

away of her noble son. *Krishna* consoles that the *Vasus* having been cursed earlier by sage *Vashishtha* to have human birth, while all else had returned earlier to their quarters as desired by her, *Bhishma* is going back to his supreme abode to dwell among *Vasus*. He is the same one who having fought like a warrior was killed by *Arjuna* and not indeed by *Shikhandi*, when he laid down his weapons, or else even *Indra* could not have been able to defeat him. Therefore, she need not grieve his death. Thus consoled by *Krishna* and *Vyasa*, *Ganga* become calm and flows peacefully 'समाश्वसिहि भद्रे त्वं मा शुचः शुभदर्शने || गतः स परमं लोकं तव पुत्रो न संशयः | वसुरेव महातेजाः शापदोषेण शोभने || मानुषत्वमनुप्राप्तो नैनं शोचितुमर्हसि | स एष क्षत्रधर्मेण आयोध्यन रणाजिरे || धनंजयेन निहतो नैष देवि शिखण्डिना || भीष्मं हि कुरुशार्दूलमुद्यतेषुं महारणे || न शक्तः संयुगे हन्तुं साक्षादपि शतक्रतुः | स्वच्छन्देनस्तव सुतो गतः स्वर्गं शुभानने || न शक्ता विनिहन्तुं रणे तं सर्वा देवताः | तस्मान्मा त्वं सरिच्छ्रेष्ठे शोचस्व कुरुनन्दनम्| वसूनेव गतो देवि पुत्रस्ते विज्वरा भव ||'.

When *Yudhishthira* saw *Bhisma's* mortal remains being consumed by fire, he became week and limp with sorrow, had not *Bhima* supported him at the instance of *Krishna*. Seeing him thus grieving, even *Dhritarashtra* tells him not to lament, protesting that if any one has to grieve, it is for him and *Gandhari* having lost all their hundred sons like wealth lost in dreams. Therefore, seeing them he should cease lamentation on the events that have been in the past and look forwards in life 'उत्तिष्ठ कुरुशार्दूल कुरु कार्यमनन्तरम्| क्षत्रधर्मेण कौन्तेय जितेयमवनी त्वया ||.. शोचितव्यं न पश्यामि त्वया धर्मभृतां वर || शोचितव्यं मया चैव गान्धार्या च महीपते | ययोः पुत्रशतं नष्टं स्वप्नलब्धं यथा धनम्|| अश्रुत्वा हितकामस्य विदुरस्य महात्मनः | वाक्यानि सुमहार्थानि परितप्यामि दुर्मतिः ||..वृद्धौ हि तेऽद्य पितरौ पश्य नौ दुःखितौ नृपा | न शोचितव्यं भवता पश्यामीह जनधिप ||'.

Krishna too then advises that if one mourns too much for the dead, then ancestors become despondent 'अतीव मनसा शोकः क्रियमाणो जनाधिपः | संतापयति चैतस्य पूर्वप्रेतान्पितामहान्|| श्रुतास्त राजधर्मास्ते भीष्माद्भागीरथीसुतात्| कृष्णद्वैपायनाच्चैव नारदाद्विदुरात् तथा || नेमामर्हसि मूढानां वृत्तिं त्वमनुवर्तितुम्| पितृपैतामहं वृत्तमास्थाय धुरमुद्वह ||'. *Yudhishthira* replies that it is the love and affection which *Bhishma*, *Krishna*, *Vyasa*, *Narada* and *Vidura* have for him that makes them speak thus otherwise his desire would still be to retire and live in the forests, since he has no peace here. Seeing him speak in dejection, *Vyasa* advises him if he thinks that he is responsible for the mass massacre, then let him perform *Rajasuya* sacrifice as performed by his ancestors 'ईश्वरेण च युक्तोऽयं साध्वसाधु च मानवः | करोति पुरुषः कर्म तत्र का परिदेवना || आत्मन मन्यसे चाथ पापकर्माणमन्ततः | शृणु तत्र यथापापमपकृष्येत भारत ||..तपोभिः क्रतुभिश्चैव दानेन च युधिष्ठिर | तरन्ति नित्यं पुरुषा ये स्म पापानि कुर्वते ||... राजसूयाश्वमेधौ च सर्वमेधं च भारत | नरमेधं च नृपते त्वमाहर युधिष्ठिर ||... यथा च भरतो राजा दौष्यन्तिः पृथिवीपतिः | शाकुन्तलो महावीर्यस्तव पूर्वपितामहः ||.'

Krishna points out to him that it is the disease of two kinds - physical and mental, both complementing each other. Cold, heat and wind influence body and keeping them in balance assure the physical health. Similarly, luminous, enterprise and obscure attributes determine the mental health. Keeping them in balance assure both physical and mental health. Cold affects the heat and heat in return the cold. When luminous, enterprise and obscure attributes are kept in balance, that state is the sign of equanimity 'द्विविधो जायते व्याधिः शरीरो मानसस्तथा | परस्परं तयोर्जन्म निर्द्वन्द्वं नोपपद्यते || शरीरे जायते व्याधिः शारीरः स निगद्यते | मानसो जायते व्याधिर्मानसस्तु निगद्यते || शितोष्णे चैव वायुश्च गुणा राजन्शरीरजाः | तेषां गुणानां साम्यं चेत् तदाहुः स्वस्थलक्षणम्|| उष्णेन बाध्यते शीतं शतिनोष्णं च बाध्यते | सत्वं राजस्तमश्चेति त्रय आत्मगुणाः स्मृताः || तेषां गुणानां साम्यं चेत्तदाहुः स्वस्थलक्षणम्||'. For any increase in one of these or imbalance between these, necessary remedy is suggested. Happy moments are affected by unhappy ones, and unhappy ones by happy ones. But it is generally observed that in moments of unhappiness, one remembers and recollects happy moments and in moments of happiness one desires to remember and recollect unhappy moments. - 'तेषामन्यतमोत्सेके विधानमुपदिश्यते || हर्षेण बाध्यते शोको हर्षः शोकेन बाध्यते | कश्चिद्दुःखे वर्तमानः सुखस्य स्मर्तुमिच्छति | कश्चिद् सुखे वर्तमानो दुःखस्य स्मर्तुमिच्छति ||'.

Pandavas are to be seen remembering and recollecting unhappiness without being unhappy and hoping for happiness even after being in happiness. If this is not delusion caused by unhappiness, then what else is? Or perhaps this is their attributes that makes them to do so. Having seen many humiliating incidents in life and living difficult days in forests, they do not desire to recollects them in mind. Now they are faced with similar struggle but this struggle has to be fought in mind, where there is neither arrow not any weapons; and this struggle is before them and they have to fight on their own. If

they do not win this battle, no one knows what will happen of them? Realizing this be prepared and conscientious. Knowing that for every creatures such moments come, they should rule the lands which has come to then from ancestors 'कश्चिदद्दुःखे वर्तमानः सुखस्य स्मर्तुमिच्छति | कश्चित्सुखे वर्तमानो दुःखस्य स्मर्तुमिच्छति || स त्वं न दुःखी दुःखस्य न सुखी सुसुखस्य च | स्मर्तुमिच्छसि कौन्तेय किमन्यद्दुःखविभ्रमात्|| अथवा ते स्वभावोऽयं येन पार्थावकृष्यते |...यच्च ते द्रोणभीष्माभ्यां युद्धमासीदरिंदम | मनसैकेन योद्धव्यं तत्ते युद्धमुपासितम्|| तस्मदभ्युपगन्तव्यं युद्धाय भरतर्षभ | परमव्यक्तरूपस्य पारं युक्त्वा स्वकर्मभिः || यत्र नैव शरैः कार्यं न भृत्यैर्न च बन्धुभिः | आत्मनैकेन योद्धव्यं तत्ते युद्धमुपस्थितम्|| तस्मिन्ननिर्जिते युद्धे कामवस्थां गमिष्यसि | एतज्ज्ञात्वा तु कौन्तेय कृतकृत्यो भविष्यसि || एतां बुद्धिं विनिश्चित्य भूतानामागतिं गतिम्| पितृपैतामहे वृत्ते शाधि राज्यं यथोचितम्||'.

Concluding *Krishna* reminds that it is not known whether one attain सिद्धि proficiency by renunciation of external objects. But one who renounces them but is ever attached to his senses, get with out slightest doubts the pleasures which those who despise them gets. मम - *Mine* the mortal *Death* and न मम - '*not mine*' the immortal *Brahman,* existing within one's own self represent the means of attaining eternal *Brahman.* If after gaining the whole world with the creatures and possession one is give up attachment to them, or one dwelling in the forest does not give attachment to senses, what can one do with such ones? Be aware of the nature of the external and internal foes. For only the one who sees the things with detached mind becomes delivered from the great danger. The world does not praise one who is attached to senses. The wise one considering them as harmful renounces them. The one whose mind is immersed in desires is not respected in life. All activities originate from desires and desires from mind. Men of wisdom considering desires as the origin of sufferings, renounce them. Desire cannot be easily destroyed, neither by weapons, sacrifices, scriptural knowledge, valour, by penance and austerity nor even by seeking deliverance, because these themselves will end up being desires that bind, remaining un-destroyed and lasting for ever 'न बाह्यं द्रव्यमुत्सृज्य सिद्धिर्भवति भारत |...बाह्यद्रव्यविमुक्तस्य शारीरेषु च गृद्ध्यतः | यो धर्मो यत्सुखं चैव द्विषतामस्तु तत्तथा || द्व्यक्षरस्तु भवेन्मृत्युस्त्र्यक्षरं ब्रह्म शाश्वतम्| ममेति च भवेन्मृत्युर्न च शाश्वतम्||...लब्ध्वा हि पृथ्वीं कृत्स्नां सहस्थावरजङ्गमान्| ममत्वं यस्य नैव स्यात्किं तया स करिष्याति || अथावा वसतः पार्थ वने वन्येन जीवनः | ममता यस्य द्रव्येषु मृत्योरास्यो स वर्त ते || भह्यान्तरणां शत्रूणां स्वभाव पश्य भारत ऽम्यन्न पश्याति तद्भूतं मुच्यते स महाभायात्|| कामात्मानं न प्रशंसन्ति लोके नेहाकामा काचिदस्ति प्रवृत्तिः | सर्वे कामा मनसोऽङ्गप्रभूता यान्पण्डितः संहरते विचिन्त्य || . . नाहं शक्योऽनुपायेन हन्तुं भूतेन केनचित्|| यो मां प्रयतते हन्तुं ज्ञात्वा प्रहरणे बलम्| तस्य तस्मिन्प्रहरणे पुनः प्रादुर्भवाम्यहम्|| यो मां प्रयतते हन्तुं यज्ञैर्विविधदक्षिणैः | जङ्गमेष्विव धर्मात्मा पुनः प्रादुर्भवाम्यहम्||.. यो मां प्रयतते हन्तुं मोक्षमास्थाय पण्डितः | तस्य मोक्षरतिस्थस्य नृत्यामि च हसामि च | अवध्यः सर्व भूतानामहमेकः सनतनः || तस्मात्त्वमपि तं कामं यज्ञैर्विविधदक्षिणैः | धर्मे कुरु महाराज तत्र ते स भविष्यति || यजस्व वाजिमेधेन विधिवद्दक्षिणावता | अन्यैश्च विविधैर्यज्ञैः समृद्धैराप्तदक्षिणैः ||'.

Finally *Krishna* persuades him to perform sacrifices and not lament on those who are dead, because they cannot be brought back again. This alone will bring him praise and renown in this world and the next 'यजस्व वाजिमेधेन विधिवद्दक्षिणावता |...मा ते व्यथास्तु निहतान्बन्धून्वीक्ष्य पुनः पुनः | न शक्यास्ते पुनर्दष्टुं हताऽस्मिन्रणाजिरे || स त्वमिष्ट्वा महायज्ञैः समृद्धैराप्तदक्षिणैः | कीर्तिं लोके परां प्राप्य गतिमग्र्यां गमिष्यसि ||' These words of *Wisdom* spoken by *Krishna* make *Yudhishthira* becomes calm, composed and self-assured saying that there remains no slightest of doubts in his mind 'अश्वासितोऽहं प्राग्वृद्धैर्भवद्भिर्मुनिपुङ्गवैः | न सूक्ष्ममपि मे किंचिद्व्यलीकमिह विद्यते ||'. Then sages and seers who had gathered there disappeared from their sight after taking leave of *Yudhishthira*, *Krishna* and *Arjuna* 'एवमुक्तासु ते राजा सर्व एव महर्षयः | अभ्यनुज्ञाप्य राजानं तथोभौ कृष्णफाल्गुनौ || पश्यतामेव सर्वेषां तत्रैवादर्शनं ययुः |'. *Yudhishthira* placing *Dhritarashtra* in forefront departs for *Hastinapura* and rules his lands in *Dvapara yuga*, even as *Manu* and *Dasharathi Rama* did in *Krita* and *Treta yugas*. Observing that *Kali yuga* is fast approaching he made provision for that *yuga* also in his kingdom and ruled the kingdom with all righteousness 'स समाश्वास्य पितरं प्रज्ञाचक्षुषमीश्वरम्| अन्वशाद्वै स धर्मात्मा पृथिवीं भ्रातृभिः सह || यथा मनुर्महाराजो रामो दाशरथिर्यथा | तथा भरतसिंहोऽपि पालयामास मेदिनीम्|| कलिमासन्नमाविश्तं निवार्य नृपनन्दनः | भ्रातृभिः सहितो धीमान्धर्मबलोद्धतः ||'.

After spending few days in *Hastinapur, Krishna* tells *Arjuna* that since *Yudhishthira* has established his rule with peace and safety and having enjoyed their company, he would like to return to *Dvaraka* to meet his parents, *Balarama* and all others. Therefore please place this request before *Yudhishthira,* since he cannot do this since he may not be happy with that request 'रमे वाहं त्वया सार्धमरण्येष्वपि पाण्डव | किमुपत्र जनेऽयं वै पृथा चामित्रकर्षणः || यत्र धर्मसुतो राजा यत्र भीमो महाबलः | यत्र माद्रवतीसुतौ रतिस्तत्र परा मम ||..धर्मपुत्रं हि धर्मज्ञं कृतज्ञं

सत्यवादिनि | सत्यं धर्मो मतिश्चाग्या स्थितिश्च सततं स्थिग ||...न हि तस्यापियं कुर्यां प्राणत्यागेऽप्युपस्थिते | कुतो गन्तुं महाबाहो पुरी द्वारवतीं पृति ||...प्रयोजनं च निवृत्तमिह वासे ममार्जुन | धार्तराष्ट्रो हतो गजा सबलाः सपादानगः ||'. *Arjuna* acknowledges with gratitude on account of which *Yudhishthira* became the King and *Kauravas* were annihilated.

Therefore, before *Krishna* proceeds for *Dvaraka, Arjuna* confides in him that whatever that was communicated to him on the battle field by him and enlightenment of his *divine resplendence* is lost due to fickleness of his mind, भ्रष्टचेतसा therefore, he is keen to listen the wisdom gain, since he would soon be returning to *Dvaraka* 'विदितं मे महाबाहो संग्रामे समुपस्थिते | माहात्म्यं देवकीमातस्तच्च ते रूपमैश्वरम्|| यत्तद्भगवता प्रोक्तं पुरा केशव सौहृदात्| तदसर्वं पुरुषव्याघ्र नष्टं मे भ्रष्टचेतसा || मम कौतुहलं त्वस्ति तेष्वर्थेषु पुनः पुनः | भवांस्तु द्वारकां गन्ता नचिरादिव माधव ||'. At that moment *Krishna* chides him saying that he had communicated to him the secret wisdom which revealed his supreme metaphysical *essence* and resplendent *form* and other eternal worlds, but Arjuna had due to his lack of receptivity and through insensitivity had not been recipient. It is difficult for him now to communicate the the *Wisdom* again - 'श्रावितस्त्वं मया गुह्यं ज्ञापितश्च सनातनम्| धर्मं स्वरूपिणं पार्थ सर्वलोकांश्च शाश्वतान्|| अबुद्ध्या नाग्रहीर्यस्त्वं तन्मे सुमहदप्रियम्| न च साऽद्य पुनर्भूयः स्मृतिर्मे सम्भविष्यति || नूनमश्रद्दधानोऽसि दुर्मेधा ह्यसि पाण्डव | न च शक्यं पुनर्वक्तुमशेषेण धनञ्जय ||' substantiating the statement that lightening does not strike with the same intensity and in the same place twice. But *Krishna* is compassionate, therefore, what comes out as गुह्यं वैष्णवं धर्मशासनम् is *Anu Gita.*

It may appear strange that both *Arjuna* and *Krishna* spoken as the descent of the seer नर and नारायण - 'नरनारायणौ यौ तौ पूर्वं देवौ विभावसो | सम्प्राप्तौ मानुषं लोकं कार्यार्थं हि दिवौकसम्|| अर्जुनं वासुदेवं च यौ तौ लोकोऽभिमन्यते | तावेतौ सहितावेहि खाण्डवस्य समीपतः ||, they should respond as they do former lacking receptivity and failing to remember and recollect the supreme Wisdom 'यत्तद्भगवता प्रोक्तं पुरा केशव सौहृदात्| तदसर्वं पुरुषव्याघ्र नष्टं मे भ्रष्टचेतसा ||' and the latter expressing inability to convey the same again in the same form and substance, without leaving some thing os the ear;ier communication 'न च साऽद्य पुनर्भूयः स्मृतिर्मे सम्भविष्यति || नूनमश्रद्दधानोऽसि दुर्मेधा ह्यसि पाण्डव | न च शक्यं पुनर्वक्तुमशेषेण धनञ्जय ||.

Vyasa of vast, comprehensive and deep intelgenece has seen the divesity in creation occasioned by human being caused by attributes and inclinations born of nature. Therefore, in *Mahabharata,* one finds the distinct and distinguishing feature of both being presenting extensively through out thenarrative. While *Arjuna* does not appear often as one enlightened to the *divine essence* within being obscured by beguiling माया of his attributes and inclinations born of nature, *Krishna,* even when responding to his attributes and inclinations born of nature, was consciously enlightened of the *divine essence* within himself 'अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सन्| प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय सम्भवाम्यात्ममायया ||' and 'अहं विष्णुरहं ब्रह्मा शक्रोऽथ प्रभवाप्ययः || भूतग्रामस्य सर्वस्य स्रष्टा संहार एव च | अधर्मे वर्तमानानां सर्वेषामहमच्युतः || धर्मस्य सेतुं बध्नामि चालिते चलिते युगे | तास्ता योनीः प्रविश्याहं प्रजानां हितकाम्यया || यदा त्वहं देवयोनौ वर्तामि भृगु नन्दन | तदाहं देववत्सर्वमाचरामि न संशयः ||. . मनुष्ये वर्तमानो तु कृपणं याचिता मया | न च जतसम्मोहा वचो गृह्णन्तु मे हितम्||'. '*Shiva* too endorsing tells 'असतां निग्रहार्थाय धर्मसंरक्षणाय च | अवतीर्णो मनुष्याणामजायत यदुक्षये || स एवं भगवान् विष्णुः कृष्णेति परिकीर्त्यते | अनाद्यमजन्तं देव प्रभु लोकनमस्कृतं ||, further telling seers about *Krishna's* eternal mystery, greater than that of *Brahma* and luminous like Sun in cloudless sky - 'पितामहादपि वरः शाश्वतः पुरुषो हरिः | कृष्णो जाम्बूनदाभासो व्यभ्रे सूर्य इवोदितः ||'.

Krishna's reply to *Arjuna* expressing his inabaility to repeat to whatever was communicated earlier without some portion left out from being told requires a detailed study, reflection and clarification at a later stage, not only from emotional and devotional point of view but also from purely intellectual and metaphysical point of view, how such resplendent personality, who played dominant role and influence in the society came to be accepted as supreme divine personality, which will be done extensively in a Chapter that will follow later. However it may suffice to say that every manifestation has within itself the divine essence which one may or may not be consciously aware. This awareness comes with the gradual evolution of the consciousness, beginning with perhaps complete unawareaness and ith gradual enfoldment of that conscious in varying degrees and intensity, in some in leasser extent and in others in larger, some having realized their role and purpose while others still oblivious, but evidencing and acknowledging the existence of that divine resplendence as *Krishna*

himself pointd out 'नान्तोऽस्ति मम दिव्यानां विभूतिनां परन्तप | एष तूद्देशतः पोक्तो विभूतेर्विस्तरो मया || यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा | तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोंऽशसम्भवम्|| अथवा बहुनैतेन किं ज्ञातेन तवार्जुन | विष्टभ्याहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत् ||'.

Therefore some souls in whom the resplendence becomes evident they become enterprising, energetic, intellctualy and spiritually luminous. Some who have come say like *Buddha* say, '*I am not the first Buddha who neither came upon the earth nor shall be last. In due time, another Buddha will arise in the world, a holy one, a supremely enlightened one endowed with wisdom in conduct, an auspicious one . . . He will reveal the same eternal truth, which I have taught you. He will preach you that which is great in the beginning, great in the middle and great in the goal*'. Jesus said that as the Son of the Father in Heaven he has come to establish not to destroy the ancient Law, Muhammad wrote down what the angels revelaed as the Allah's Message to the world. But *Krishna* says that he himself had conveyed the imperishable *Yoga* to *Vivasvan*, the *Sun*, who conveyed to *Manu* and handed over from one to other was lost to the world, withefflux of Time, and the same he is conveying to *Arjuna*. Unlike others who came as prophets and messangers, *Krishna* alone claimed himself to the *Supreme Brahman* who though unborn and imperishable and lord of the universe has established in *Prakriti*, through hisown formatting power आत्ममायया. Therefore, in *Bhagavat Purana* we find it mentioned, 'एतन्नानावतराणां निधानं बीजमव्ययम्| यस्यांशेपन सृजन्ते देवतिर्यङ्नरादयः ||' and 'ऋषयो मनवो देवा मनुपुत्रा महौजसः | कलाः सर्वे हरेरेव सप्रजापानायस्तथा || एते चांशकलाः पुंसः कृष्णस्तु भगवान्स्वयम्|'.

Thereafter both *Krishna* and *Arjuna* go to *Yudhishthira* and taking his permission they depart along with *Subhadra* for *Dvaraka*. On the way as he was crossing the great desert, he comes across seer *Uttanka Bhargava*, who after honouring *Krishna* asks him about the welfare of *Kauravas* and *Pandavas* and how he solved the internecine disputes. *Krishna* replies that in spite of his best efforts he could not bring a compromise between them, and in the war that followed, *Dhritarashtra's* all hundred sons were destroyed and only five *Pandavas* were left - 'कृतो यत्नो मया पूर्वं सौशाम्ये कौरवान्प्रति | नाशक्यन्त यदा साम्ये ते स्थापयितुमञ्जसा || ततस्ते निधनं पाप्ताः सर्वे ससुतबान्धवाः | न दिष्टमप्यतिकान्तुं शक्यं बुद्ध्या बलेन वा ||.. ततो यमक्षयं जग्मुः समासाद्येतरेतरम्| पञ्चैव पाण्डवाः शिष्टा हतामित्रा हतात्मजाः | धार्तराष्ट्राश्च निहताः सर्वे ससुतबान्धवाः ||'. Hearing this *Uttanaka* becomes angry with him and readies himself to curse him for having failed, since he did not prevent the war in spite of his power to do so and save them from destruction 'इत्युक्तवचनं कृष्णं भृशं कोधसमन्वितः | उत्तङ्क इत्युवाचैनं रोषादुत्फुल्ललोचनः || यस्माच्छक्तेन ते कृष्ण न त्राताः कुरुपुङ्गवाः | सम्बन्धिनः पियास्तस्माच्छप्स्येऽहं त्वामसंशयम्|| न च ते पसभं यस्मात् ते निगृह्य निवारिताः | तस्मान्मन्युपरीतस्त्वां शप्स्यामि मधुसूदन || त्वया शक्तेन हि सता मिथ्याचारेण माधव | ते परीताः कुरुश्रेष्ठा नश्यन्तः स्म ह्युपेक्षिताः ||'.

Krishna agrees to communicates the reason for his actions, because by cursing him *Uttanks's* penance and austerities would go in vain, 'श्रुणु मे विस्तरेणेद यद्वक्ष्ये भृगुनन्दन | गृहाणानुनयं चापि तपस्वी ह्यसि भार्गव || श्रुत्वा च मे तदाध्यात्मं मुञ्चेथाः शापमद्य वै | न च मां तपसाल्पेन शक्तोऽभिभवितुं पुमान्|| ते च ते तपसो नाशमिच्छामि तपतां वर | तपस्ते सुमहद्दीप्तं गुरवश्चापि तोषिताः || कौमारं ब्रह्मचर्यं ते जानामि द्विजसत्तम | दुःखार्जितस्य तपसस्तस्मान्नेच्छामि ते व्ययम्||'. *Uttanka* having gained considerable achievements through communion with *Brahman* from childhood, asks for a boon instead from *Krishna* for his supreme resplendence to reveal him. What then comes out is the rationale and justification for *Krishna's* actions, revealing the essential *Krishna-Consciousness* in his various *Krishna-forms* in descents. *Krishna* tells *Uttanka* that he is repository of सत्व, रज and तम attributes, even as of the *Rudras* and *Vasus*. In him is posited creation and he in all creation, even *daityas*, *yakshas*, *gandharvas*, *rakshasas*, *nagas* and *apsaras* all having origin in him. Men of *Wisdom* accept him as the *Existence* and *non-Existence*, *Un-Manifest-Manifest*, *Immutable* and *mutable*, all these are verily his forms as well as the four-fold stages in life as well as the actions stipulated by *vedic* scriptures. *Non-Existence*, *Existence*, and that which is beyond this universe are nothing else and not distinct from him. सनातन धर्म - the perennial righteousness is born from his mind and he dwells in every one who had transcended from performance of actions. As a spark of energy, dwelling within each one, he descends in the three worlds in may forms and aspects for protection of righteousness 'तमो रजश्च सत्वं च विद्धि भावान्मदाश्रयान्| तथा रुद्रान्वसून् .. मयि सर्वाणि भूतानि सर्वभूतेषु चाप्यहम्|.. तथा दैत्यगणान्सर्वान् यक्षगन्धर्वराक्षसान्| नागानप्सरसश्चैव .. सदसच्चैव पाहुरव्यक्तं व्यक्तमेव च | अक्षरं च क्षरं चैव.. ये चाश्रमेषु वै धर्माश्चतुर्धा विदिता मुने | वैदिकानि च सर्वाणि .. असच्च सदसच्चैव यद्विश्वं सदसत्परम्| मत्तः परतरं नास्ति देवदेवात्सनातनम्||.. तत्राहं वर्तमानैश्च निवृत्तैश्चैव मानवैः || बह्वीः संसरमाणो वै

योनिवर्तामि सत्तम | धर्म संरक्षणार्थाय धर्मसंस्थापनाय च || तैस्तैर्वेषैश्च रूपैश्च त्रिषु लोकेषु भार्गव |'.

In all his earlier *Krishna-forms* he is *Vishnu*, *Brahma*, *Shakra*, the creator and destroyer, acting as *God* in the *godly* forms, as *Gandharva* in the *gandharva* forms, as *Naga* in the *naga* forms and as *Yakha*, *Rakshasa* and as others in their respective forms, in his present *Krishna-form* he performs actions as a human being in human form, pleading with *Kauravas* for a negotiated settlement and when they did not listen, obscuring their intelligence, even showing his terrifying form to frighten them and describing them the effect of dreadful war. But being in attributes and inclination, unrighteous in their disposition they refused to listen to him and died like *Kshatriyas* in the great war, 'अहं विष्णुरहं ब्रह्मा शक्रोऽथ प्रभवाप्ययः |..यदा त्वहं देवयोनौ वर्तामि भृगुनन्दन | तदाहं देववत्सर्वमाचरामि न संशयः || यदा गन्धर्वयोनौ.. नागयोनौ ..यक्षराक्षसयोन्योस्तु यथावद्विचराम्यहम्|| मनुष्ये वर्तमाने तु कृपणं याचिता मया | न च ते जातसम्मोहा वचोऽगृह्णन्त मे हितम्|| भयं च महदुद्दिश्य त्रासिताः कुरवो मया | क्रुद्धेन भूत्वा तु पुनर्यथावदनुदर्शिताः || तेऽधर्मेणेह संयुक्ताः परीताः कालधर्मणा | धर्मेण निहता युद्धे गताः स्वर्गं न संशयः ||'.

Unlike the manner in which *Krishna* displayed his resplendence to *Kauarvas* in the royal court to frighten them in submission, or to *Arjuna* on the battle field to show his essential resplendent reach, his explanation to *Uttanaka* was rational and intellectual. With the explanation his mind was intellectually satisfied being in tune with him 'चित्तं च सुप्रसन्नं मे त्वद्भावगतमच्युत'. *Uttanka's* intention to curse becomes supplanted by his desire to see the resplendence of *Krishna-consciousness*, 'यदि तवनुग्रहं कर्मचित्तवत्तोऽर्हामि जनर्दन | द्रष्टुमिच्छामि ते रूपमैश्वरं तन्निदर्शय ||'. *Krishna* shows his resplendent form which was earlier shown in *Kauarava* court and to *Arjuna* on the battle field - 'ततः स तस्मै प्रीतात्मा दर्शयामास तद्वपुः | शाश्वतं वैष्णवं धीमान्ददृशे यद्धनंजयः ||'. But each one's response was according to their attributes and inclination, *Kauarvas* were stupefied and confounded, *Arjuna's* was emotional and overwhelmed, bordering unconditioned devotion and complete surrender. *Uttankas'* response was intellectual and bordering with supreme wonder at the magnificence of the spectacle - 'स ददर्श महात्मानं विश्वरूपं महाभुजम्| सहस्रसूर्यप्रतिमं दीप्तिमत्पावकोपमम्|| सर्व माकाशमावृत्य तिष्ठन्तं सर्वतोमुखम्| स दृष्ट्वा परमं रूपं विष्णोर्वैष्णवमद्भुतम्| विस्मयं च ययौ विप्रस्तं दृष्ट्वा परमेश्वरम्||'. *Kauarava's* left the assembly hall frightened and in confusion, *Arjuna* became overwhelmed, requesting *Krishna* in faltering voice and with folded hands, trembling and prostrating in fear to withdraw the resplendent form 'कृताञ्जलिर्वेपमानः . .नमस्कृत्वा भूय एवाह सगद्गदं भीतभीतः प्रणम्य' saying additionally 'अदृष्टपूर्वं हृषितोऽस्मि दृष्ट्वा भयेन च प्रव्यथितं मनो मे | तदेव मे दर्शय देव रूपं प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास ||'. *Uttanka* was astonished and bewildered by the form, 'विस्मयं च ययौ विप्रस्तं दृष्ट्वा परमेश्वरम्' requests *Krishna* to withdraw his immutable form and present himself in his original form 'संहरस्व पुनर्देव रूपमक्षय्यमुत्तमम्| पुनस्त्वां स्वेन रूपेण द्रष्टुमिच्छामि शाश्वतम्||'. Pleased with adoration, *Krishna* gives *Uttanka* a boon to receive water in desert at will and traverses further to go to *Dvaraka*.

Uttanka's enlightenment, however does not appear to have been comprehensive in *essence* because even after acknowledging and referring *Krishna* as हिरण्यगर्भरूपाय, संसारोत्तारणाय, अविद्यातिमिरादित्यं, नित्याय, विश्वकर्मनor विश्वात्मन्, he could not experience *Krishna's* enveloping and all encompassing personality. When later he was thirsty and sought water, he did not see divine essence in a *shudra* who offered him water and protested that it was not proper for a *Brahmin* to drink from a *shudra*, 'न युक्तं तादृशं दातुं त्वया पुरुषसत्तम || सलिलं विप्रमुख्येभ्यो मातङ्गस्रोतसा विभो |', only to see *shudra* and his dogs disappear from his sight being deluded by divine माया. *Krishna* then consoles him lovingly that the water was given in a manner found necessary, 'यादृशेनेह रूपेण योग्यं दातुं धृतानि वै || तादृशं खलु ते दत्तं यच्च त्वं नावबुध्यथाः |' and that it was not ordinary water but nectar offered by *Indra* appearing him as a *shudra* 'चाण्डालरूपी भगवान्सुमहांस्ते व्यतिक्रमः | यत् तु शक्यं मया कर्तुं भूय एव तवेप्सितम्||'. Since he did not recognize that the divine essence could be in every form that is created, he was deprived of nectar, which otherwise would have given immortal existence.

It is established truism that enlightenment by itself does not deliver one form the illusory world or from its bondage, so long as the same does not become engrained in them, the attributes and inclinations born of nature becoming the impediments. Innumerable persons who have been enlightened of the *divine essence* having to live the remaining years of their life in their gross *forms* fulfilling the effect of the *karmas* of their earlier lives. The ray which was revealed in a fraction of

moment, flashing like lightening and roaring like thunder, has to be grasped with tenacity and retained in perseverance. *Mundaka Up. (III.ii.5-6)* points out that only those seers, who having satisfied themselves with that awarness having experienced the all-comprehensive and all-pervading self, become perfected souls, free from passion, tranquil in mind, dwelling in the consciousness of *Brahman* till the end of their period (in the human form), enter the totality of the *Self* and become one with the immortal self and truly liberated 'सम्प्राप्यैनमृषयो ज्ञानतृप्ताः कृतात्मनो वीतरागाःप्रशान्ताः | ते सर्वगं सर्वतः प्राप्य धीरा युक्तात्मानः सर्व मेवाविशन्ति || .. ते ब्रह्मलोकेषु परान्तकाले परामृताः परिमुच्यन्ति सर्वे ||'.

On reaching *Dvaraka*, *Krishna* finds his people celebrating a festival on *Raivataka* mountain, in which even gods and seers participate in their subtle forms. He goes first to his parents and offers them his respects. When his father asked him to narrate the wonderful events during the War 'श्रुतवानस्मि वार्ष्णेय संग्रामं परमाद्भुतम् | नराणां वदतां तत्र कथं वा तेषु नित्यशः ||', *Krishna*, avoids saying that he would take hundred years to narrate in detail 'अत्यद्भुतानि कर्माणि क्षत्रियाणां महात्मनाम्| वहुलत्वान्न संख्यातुं शक्यान्यशब्दशतैरपि ||'. He mentions, therefore, only that there was a great destruction on both sides, only *Pandavas* and *Satyaki* and himself remaining on the side of *Pandavas* and *Ashvatthama*, *Kripa* and *Kritaverma* on the side of *Kauaravas*, leaving out purposely any references to *Abhimanuyu's* death 'हतपुत्रा हतवला हतमित्रा मया सह | युयुधानसहायेन पञ्च शिष्टास्तु पाण्डवाः || सहैव कृपभोज्याभ्यां द्रौणिर्युद्धादमुच्यत | युयुत्सुश्चापि कौरव्यां पांडवसंश्रयात्||...कथमन्तेव तु तदा वासुदेवः प्रतापवान्| महाभारयुद्धं तत्कथान्ते पितुरग्रतः || अभिमन्योर्व धं वीरं योऽत्यकामन्महामतिः | अप्रियं वसुदेवस्य मा भूदिति महामतिः || मा दौहित्रवधं श्रुत्वा वसुदेवो महात्ययम्| दुःखशोकाभिसंतप्तो भवेदिति महामतिः ||'. *Subhadra* notices this omission and with agony in her heart, tells him to narrate even that fact and falls down weeping 'सुभद्रा तु तमुत्क्रान्तमात्मजस्य वधं रणे | आचक्ष्व कृष्ण सौभद्रवधमित्यपतद्भुवि ||. *Krishna* was thus forced to relate the manner of *Abhimanyu's* death, reminding that he fought like a warrior and died like a hero going to the heavens to be hounored.

Here in *Hastinapur*, when *Abhimanyu's* wife *Uttara* hears the news she sinks in inconsolable sorrow. *Kunti* consoles her saying that the time was not for mourning his death but for caring his baby in her womb 'वैराटि नेह संतापस्त्वया कार्यो ह्यनिन्दिते | भर्तारं प्रति सुश्रोणि गर्भस्थं रक्ष वै शिशुम् ||'. *Vyasa* assures her that her son would be a great and successful king and will rule the kingdom with *Krishna's* grace and blessings - 'पौत्रस्तव महाभागो जनिष्यति महामनाः | पृथ्वीं सागरपर्यन्तां पालयिष्यन्ति धर्मतः || तस्माच्छोकं कुरुश्रेष्ठ जहि त्वमरिकर्शन | विचार्यमत्र न हि ते सत्यामेतद्भविष्यति ||'. To guard *Abhimanyu's* son growing in the womb, *Vyasa* advising *Yudhishthira* to perform *Ashvamedha Yajna* departs to *Himalayas*. Then *Krishna* and *Balarama* along with all others leave for *Hastinapur* to participate in the *Yajna*.

When *Uttara* delivers her child celebrations begin but soon an eerie silence falls when they see the baby not responding to life or consciousness. *Krishna* and *Satyaki* rush to the inner chambers, where they see their aunt *Kunti* urging them to hurry and save the child, the last hope for continuing the family line 'ततः सोऽतित्वरः कृष्णो विवेशान्तःपुरं तदा | युयुधानद्वितीयो वै व्यथितेन्द्रियमानसः || ततस्त्वरितमायान्तीं ददर्श स्वां पितृष्वसाम्| क्रोशन्तीमभिधावेति वासुदेवं पुनः पुनः ||...वासुदेव महाबाहो सुप्रजा देवकी त्वया | त्वं नो गतिः प्रतिष्ठा च त्वदायत्तमिदं कुलम्|| यदुप्रवीर योऽयं ते स्वस्त्रीयस्यात्मजः प्रभो | अश्वत्थाम्ना हतो जातस्तमुज्जीवय केशव || त्वया ह्येतत्प्रतिज्ञातमैषीके यदुनन्दन | अहं संजीवयिष्यामि मृतं जातमिति प्रभो || सोऽयं जातो मृतस्तात पश्यैनं पुरुषर्षभ | उत्तरां च सुभद्रां च द्रौपदीं मां च माधव || अस्मिन्प्राणाः समायत्ताः पाण्डवानां ममैव च | पाण्डोश्च पिण्डो दाशार्ह तथैव श्वसुरस्य मे ||...कुलस्यास्य हितार्थं त्वं कुरु कल्याणमुत्तमम्|..अब्रुवश्च महाराज सर्वाः सास्रविलेक्षणाः | स्वस्त्रीयो वासुदेवस्य मृतो जात इति प्रभो ||'.

Draupadi and *Subhadra* lament that *Krishna's* nephew is born dead, *Ashavatthama* having robbed the last one of the *Pandavas* crying out to *Krishna* that his nephew should be saved. *Krishna* recalls that *Ashavatthama* had released *Brahmaastra* on the child in the womb and he having assured that the child will never be allowed to die. *Subhadra* tells him that he will see her no more alive if the child dies 'पुण्डरीकाक्ष पश्य त्वं पौत्रं पार्थस्य धीमतः | परिक्षीणेषु कुरुषु परिक्षीणं गतायुषम्|| इषिका द्रोणपुत्रेण भीमसेनार्थमुद्यता | सोत्तरायां निपतिता विजये मयि चैव ह || साहं प्रसादये कृष्ण त्वामद्य शिरसा नेना | पृथेयं द्रौपदी चैव ताः पश्य पुरुषोत्तम || यदा द्रोणसुतो गर्भान्पाण्डूनां हन्ति माधव | तदा किल त्वया द्रौणिः क्रुद्धेनोक्तोऽरिमर्दन || अकामं त्वां करिष्यामि ब्रह्मबन्धो नराधम | अहं संजीवयिष्यामि किरीटितनयात्मजम्|| इत्येतद्वचनं श्रुत्वा जानानाहं बलं तव | प्रसादये त्वां दुर्धर्ष जीवतामभिमन्युजः || यद्येतत्त्वं प्रतिश्रुत्य न करोषि वचः शुभम्| सकलं वृष्णिशार्दूल मृतां मामवधारय ||..त्वं हि केशव धर्मात्मा सत्यवान्सत्यविक्रमः | स तां वाचमृतां कर्तुमर्हसि त्वमरिन्दम ||'.

Then what comes to transpire is the testimony and testament, self-certified and self-established *Krishna-Consciousness* displaying in *Krishna-form* nothing short of a miracle. Seeing *Krishna* enter the inner quarters, *Draupadi* informs *Uttara* that the ancient seer who is like her father-in-law is coming towards her. Seeing *Krishna Uttara* could not more control her grief saying that both she and her late husband have both become childless and pleaded that her child be saved, wondering what *Ashvatthama* could have gained from such dastardly act 'अयमायाति ते भद्रे श्वशुरो मधुसूदनः || पुराणर्षिरचिन्त्यात्मा समीपमपराजितः ||..पुण्डरीकाक्ष पश्यावां बालेन हि विनाकृतौ | अभिमन्युं च मां चैव हतौ तुल्यं जनार्दन ||..द्रोणपुत्रास्त्रनिर्दग्धं जीवयैनं ममात्मजम्||..गर्भस्थस्यास्य बालस्य ब्रह्मास्त्रेण निपातिनम्| कृत्वा नृशंसं दुर्बुद्धिर्द्रौणीः किं फलमश्नुते ||...प्राणांस्त्यक्षामि गोविन्द नायं संजीवते यदि ||'.

Krishna did not tarry even for a moment and sipping holy water as a mark of purifying his self, dispelled the injurious effect of *Brahmastra* on the child. Then in the very presence of the people, he declared that he has never spoken untruth, therefore the word spoken by him earlier will certainly turn be true. He will certainly revive the child in the presence of the people around. If being ever upright he has never ever spoken even in jest any untruth, or defeated if he has never deserted any battle field, then let by that power the child revive to life. If ever righteousness and especially men of *Wisdom* be most dear to him, then let *Abhimanyu's* child, who is here born dead, revive to life. He has never opposed *Arjuna* ever in his victory in life, by truth of this statement let *Abhimanyu's* child, who is here born dead, revive to life. If truth and righteousness are established in him as eternal foundations, then let *Abhimanyu's* child, who is here born dead, revive to life. If *Kamsa* and *Keshi* met their death in his hands in righteous manner, then by that power let *Abhimanyu's* child, who is here born dead, revive to life - 'न ब्रवीम्युत्तरे मिथ्या सत्यमेतद्भविष्यति | एष संजीवयाम्येनं पश्यतां सर्वदेहिनाम्|| नोक्तपूर्वं मया मिथ्या स्वैरेष्वपि कदाचन | न च युद्धात्परावृत्तस्तथा संजीवतामयम्|| यथा मे दयितो धर्मो ब्राह्मणश्च विशेषतः | अभिमन्योः सुतो जातो मृतो जीवत्वयं तथा || यथाहं नाभिजानामि विजयं तु कदाचन | विरोधं तेन सत्येन मृतो जीवत्वयं शिशुः || यथा सत्यं च धर्मश्च मयि नित्यं प्रतिष्ठितौ | तथा मृतः शिशुरयं जीवतादभिमन्युजः || यथा कंसश्च केशी च धर्मेण निहतौ मया | तेन सत्येन बालोऽयं पुनः संजीवतामयम्||'.

No where and not even once *Krishna* speaks here as a divine person performing any miracles, but a human being who has supreme confidence in his own righteousness and moral standing, having realized and experienced the enlightenment of the supreme *divine essence* becoming resplendent effulgence in him. Miracles are not unnatural events; they appear unnatural to common beings because they appear strange and unusual for their gross and sensory observation. But for one whose senses are sensitive and vision deep and expansive, miracles would be as normal and natural as for the Sun to offer warmth, for the Moon to shower calm and composure, for the winds to breathe life or for flowers to spread fragrance. *Vyasa* not emphasizing his *divine foundation* here as he did earlier, when *divine mystery* was communicated to *Arjuna* on the battle field, makes it clear here how the *divine essence* within the *gross form* if realized and acknowledged becomes a potent force in temporal as well as spiritual regeneration. It is this aspect which made *Vyasa's* commitment for spiritualizing the *divine essence* in *Krishna-Form* the most powerful and ever abiding influence in India's spiritual regeneration, making him unlike all other earlier divine manifestation, the whole complete and entirety of effulgence of *That One, the Prime Existence*.

The moment *Krishna* completes his declaration, the child begins consciousness enters the limbs. The maternity room becomes joyously exhilarated with auspicious forces entering from space saying *well done, well done, Keshava Keshava* 'इत्युक्तो वासुदेवेन स बालो भरतर्षभ | शनैः शनैर्महाराज प्रास्पन्दत सचेतनः || ब्रह्मास्त्रं तु यदा राजन्कृष्णेन प्रतिसंहृतम् | तदा तद्वेश्म त्वत्पित्रा तेजसाभिविदीपितम्|| ततो रक्षांसि सर्वाणि नेशुस्त्यक्त्वा गृहं तु तत्| अन्तरिक्षे च वागासीत्साधु केशव साध्विति ||'. Seeing the child move its limbs women of the household were happy and thrilled 'व्यचेष्टत च बालोऽसौ यथोत्साहं यथाबलम्| बभूवुर्मुदिताः राजंस्तास्ता भरतस्त्रियः ||'. Since he was born in the family after the *Kuru* family had become weak he was named *Parikshit* 'परिक्षीणे कुले तस्माज्जातोऽयमभिमन्युजः || परिक्षिदिति नामास्य भवत्वित्यब्रवीत्तदा ||'. Hearing the joyous news, *Pandavas* come and offer their respect to *Krishna* for the wonderful deed performed. *Vyasa* too arrives and advises *Yudhishthira* again to perform *Ashvamedha Yajna*, which will

absolve him of all his earlier demerits 'अश्वमेधो हि गजेन्द्र पावनः सर्वपाप्मनाम्| तेनेष्ट्वा त्वं विपाप्मा वै भविता नात्र संशयाः ||'.

Yudhishthira rules for fifteen years as an emperor, with due respect to *Dhritarashtra.* Though *Dhritarashtra* was treated with respect and affection by all others with *Vidura*, *Sanjaya* and *Yuyutsu* in attendance on him, *Bhima* had his own reservation remembering the indignities which were heaped on them. According to him *Duryodhana* found support in *Dhritarashtra's* own ambition and had always held *Bhima* responsible for his misfortune. Aware of *Bhima's* feelings, *Dhritarashtra* too would express to *Yudhishthira* his desire to spend his life in forest with *Gandhari. Yudhishthira* hearing this would regrets his inability for not giving attention to their needs, engaged as he was with the affairs of the kingdom. Therefore, if they still decide to go to forests then he too would accompany them. *Dhritarashtra* lovingly replies him that he has been served well but he is inclined towards renunciation. *Vyasa* too accepts the suggestion and commends *Yudhishthira* to concede his request.

Then taking permission of the people of *Kuru-Janghala*, *Dhritarashtra* departs to the forests requesting through *Vidura* financial help to perform death anniversaries of *Bhishma* and other ancestors. *Yudhishthira* and others agree the proposal except Bhima who opposes saying that it would be better if they themselves perform those ceremonies. But *Yudhisthira's* sense of justice and fairplay does not permit him to deny his uncle's request and he gives him as much wealth as he desires. When the time comes for their departure, *Kunti* realizing the need of the hour accompanies them to the forests.

Pandavas bereft of the company of their mother, aunt and uncle, go to meet them. Then they go to meet *Vidura* who was performing austerities nearby. When *Yudhishthira* announces his presence, *Vidura* being firmly enjoined in *Yoga* looks at him with unblinking eyes. Then being conscious of *Yudhishthira's* presence he establishes his entire *essence*, every nerve and every breath, entire energy merging in him 'ततः सोऽनिमिषो भूत्वा राजानं समुदैक्षत | संयोज्य विदुरतस्मिन्दृष्टिं दृष्ट्या समाहितः || विवेश विदुरो धीमान्गात्रैगात्राणि चैव ह | प्राणान्प्राणेषु च दधर्दिन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियेषु च || स योगबालमास्थाय विवेश नृपातेस्तनूम्| विदुरो धर्मराजस्य तेजसा प्रज्ज्वलिन्निव ||'. *Yudhishthira* realizes that *Vidura* has shed his mortal coils and prepares to perform his funeral rites. But an ethereal voice speaks that *Vidura* he should not be cremated but buried, since he has become a recluse and as reached heaven- 'भो भो राजन्न दग्धव्यमेनदविदुरसंज्ञकम्| कलेवरमिहैवं ये धर्म एप सनातनः || लोकाः सान्तनिका नाम भविष्यन्त्यस्य भारत | यतिधर्ममवाप्तोऽसौ नैष शोच्यः परन्तप ||'. *Yudhishthira* comes back and relates this fact to *Dhritarashtra.*

Vyasa tells *Dhritarashtra* that in his earlier life *Vidura* was sage *Mandvya* who was a man of wisdom, great yogi and a great soul. He was great in intelligence than even *Brihaspaati* and *Shukracharyca*. It was *Vyasa* who had impregnated *Mandvaya* as the seed and that is how he became *Dhritarashtra's* brother. He is as righteous as the ancient *Yama*, the embodiment of righteousness, who begot *Yudhishthira*. Therefore, what is known as righteousness that *Vidura* represented and indeed that is also what *Yudhishthira* is, *Vidura* having merged himself in him 'विदितं चापि राजेन्द्र विदुरस्य महात्मनः | गमनं विधिनानेन धर्मस्य सुमहात्मनः || माण्डव्यशापाद्धि स वै धर्मो विदुरतं गतः | महाबुद्धिर्महायोगी महात्मा सुमहामनः || बृहस्पतिर्वा देवेषु शक्रो वाप्यसुरेषु च | न तथा बुद्धिसम्पन्नो यथा स पुरुषर्षभः || ...नियोगाद्ब्रह्मणः पूर्व मया स्वेन बलेन च | वैचित्रवीर्यके क्षेत्रे जातः स सुमहामतिः ||...प्रविष्टः स माहात्मानं भ्राता ते बुद्धिसत्तमः | दृष्ट्वा महात्मा कौन्तेयं महायोगबालान्वितः ||'. Being compassionate to *Dhritarshtra*, *Vyasa* tells him that he would like to do some marvelous deed as never done earlier in the world that was never done earlier in the world 'न कृतं वै पुरा कैश्चित्कर्म लोके महार्षिभिः | आश्चर्यभूतं तपसळ फालं तद्दर्शयोम वः || '.

Dhritarashtra tells him that he would alike to see all his sons and other warriors who have died on the battle filed in their human bodies. Taking them along with other kith and kin to the banks of river *Ganga Vyasa* gives spiritual vision to him and *Gandhari* 'धृतराष्ट्रस्य च तदा दिव्यं चक्षुर्नराधिप | मुनिः सत्यावतीपुत्रः प्रीतः प्रादात्तपोबलात्|| दिव्यज्ञानबलोपेता गान्धारी च यशविस्नी | ददशड पुत्रांस्तान्सर्वान्ये चान्येऽपि मृधे हताः ||' *Vyasa* then calls all *Kauravas* and also *Pandavas* who were dead, with their other associates to come 'ततो व्यासो महातेजाः पुण्यं भागीरथीजलम्| अवगाह्याजुवहाथ स्र्वान्लोकान्महामुनिः || पाण्डवानां चा ये योधाः कौरवाणां च सर्वशः | राजनश्च महाभागा नानादेशनिवासिनः || ततः सुतुमुलः शब्दो जलान्ते जनमेजय | प्रादुरासीद्यथापूर्वं कुरुपाण्डवसेनयोः ||'.

Then *Gandhari* and all others, extremely pleased, awe struck and motionless like some one

seen in a picture - आश्चर्यभूतं ददृशे चित्रं पटगतं यथा, saw remarkable and never seen before sight अद्भुतमचिन्त्य, sons and other kings coming out of the river ददर्श पुत्रांस्तान्ये चान्येऽपि मृधे हताः, shining in their subtle forms, same as their earlier forms, weapons and chariots they appear, shorn of all earlier hatred, meeting and embracing each others पुरुषश्रेष्ठाः समाहाग्मुः परस्परम्। विगतक्रोधमात्सर्याः सर्वे विगतकल्मषाः || विधिं परममाय ब्रह्मर्षिविहितं शुभम्। संहृष्टमनसः सर्वे देवलोक इवापगाः || पुत्रः पिता च मात्रा च भार्याश्च पतिभिः सह | भ्राता भ्राता सखा चैव सख्या राजन्समागताः || ततस्ते प्रीयमाणा वै कर्णेन सह पाण्डवाः | समेत्य पृथिवीपाल सौहृदे च स्थिता भवन्||'. *Pandavas* meet *Karna* and offer him all respect and love. After the ladies and others meet their dead husbands and relatives, *Vyasa* withdrew the vision from them and all those who had come from death disappear again in the river, along with their chariots and weapons, some returning to heavens and others to *Varuna's* region, others to *Kubera's* region, some *Sun's* region, some others to the abode of *Yama* and yet others to the region of *rakshasas, pishachas*, all from where they had come from 'ततो विसर्जयामास लोकांस्तान्मुनिपुङ्गवः || क्षणेनान्तर्हिताश्च प्रेक्षतामेव तेऽभवन्। आवगाह्य महात्मानः पुण्यां भागीरथीं नदीम्|| सरथाः सध्वजाश्चैव स्वानि वेश्मानि भेजिरे | देवलोकं ययुः केचित्केचिद्ब्रह्मसदस्तदा || केचिच्च वारुणं लोकं केचित् कौबेरमाप्नुवान्। ततो वैवस्वतं लोकं केचच्चैवाप्नुवन्नृाः || रक्षसानां पिशाचानां केचिच्चाप्युत्तरएन्कुरून्। विचित्रगतयः सर्वे यानवाप्यामरैः सह || आजग्मुस्ते महात्मानः सवाहः सपादानुगाः |'. When all the dead warriors depart, *Vyasa* makes impassioned plea to the weeping ladies, that whoever desires to follow their husbands they can do so, entering the waters of the river *Ganga*, thus assured many grieving ladies of the warriors enter the waters 'गतेषु तेषु सर्वेषु सलिलस्थो महामुनिः || धर्मशीलो महातेजा कुरूणां हितकृत्तथा | ततः प्रोवाच ताः सर्वाः क्षत्रिया निहतेश्वराः || या याः पतिकृतानलोकानिच्छन्ति परमस्त्रियः | ता जाह्नवीजलं क्षिप्रमवगाहन्त्वान्दिताः || ततस्तस्य वचः श्रुत्वा श्रद्दधाना वराङ्गनाः | श्वशुरं समनुज्ञाप्य विविशुर्जाह्नवीजलम्|| विमुक्तामानुषैर्देहैस्ततस्ता भर्तृभिः सह | समाजग्मुस्तदा साध्व्यः सर्वा एव विशाम्पते ||'.

When *Janamejaya* narrated this miraculous event, *Vaishampayana* wondered how this was possible for them to come in similar form as earlier, having once given up the body 'कथं नु त्यक्तदेहानां पुनस्तद्रूपदर्शनम्||'. Then the great sage, *Vyasa's* resplendent disciple explains the principle behind life and death, saying no *form* ever becomes completely destroyed unless it had experienced all the effects of their earlier actions. Therefore, whatever *form* a creature gets, whether gross or subtle, they all remain till all his previous aggregation of *Karmas* are not completly determined and concluded. The elements dwell eternally in the great Lord finding in refuge, thereforethey are not destroyed but only separated. 'अविप्रणाशः सर्वेषां कर्मणामिति निश्चयः | कर्मजानि शरीराणि तथैवाकृतयो नृप || महाभूतानि नित्यानि भूताधिपतिसंश्रयात्| तेषां च नित्यसंवासो न विनाशो वियुज्यताम्||'.

Natural actions performed with out desires are the true and superior and assuring deliverance. Desire bound actions bring pain and pleasure in repeated birgths and deaths. क्षेत्रज्ञ, the indwelling self even with all these desires remains unaffected, and when it becomes ttached to desires he becomesfar distanced form wisdom. Only when the karms becomes obliterated only then does its true form is realized. Then acquire a completely new *form* - 'अनायासकृत सत्यः श्रेष्ठः फलागमः || आत्मा चैभिः समायुक्तः सुखदुःखमुपाश्नुते || अविनाश्यस्तथायुक्तः क्षेत्रज्ञ इति निश्चयः | भूतानामात्मको भावो यथासौ न वियुज्यते || यावन्न क्षीयते कर्म तावत्तस्य स्वरूपता | क्षीणकर्म नरो लोके रूपान्यत्वं नियच्छति ||'.

Vaishampayana then clarifies that the essence in breath and the organs go beyond and come back in the same *form*, giving the instance of *Ashvamedha* sacrifice where one says let sight go to *Surya*, let breath go to *Vayu* etc. A sacrificer performing sacrifices likewise hopes to become competent to go the the yonder space likewise 'अश्वमेधे श्रुतिश्रेयसः श्वमज्ञपन प्रति | लोकान्तरगता नित्य प्राणा नित्य शरीरिणाम्|| आहृतो यत्र यज्ञस्ते तत्र देवा हितास्तव | यदा समन्विता देपवाः पशूनां गमनेश्वराः ||'..

Thus the five elements and the self are eternal. Human being who establishes relationship between the self and the elements and thinks that with the destructionof the lements the self also is destroyed thinks unwisely 'गतिमन्तश्च तेनेष्ट्वा नान्ये नित्या भवन्त्युत | नित्योऽस्मिन्पञ्चकं वर्गो नित्ये चात्मनि पुरुषः || अस्य नानासमायोगं यः पश्यति वृथामतिः | वियोगे शोचतेऽत्यर्थं स बाल इति मे मतिः ||'.

One who sees the defects in separation let him reject them in association, because in deatched association there remains no attachment nor any suffering. Whatever actons the *self* performs in whichever *forms* he has to sufferin those *forms*. Mentally those performed by mind and physically those performed though body 'वियोगे दोषदर्शी यः संयोगं स विसर्जयेत्| असङ्गे सङ्गमो नास्ति दुःखं भुवि वियोगजम्|| परापरज्ञस्त्वपरो

नाभिमानादुदीरितः | अपरज्ञः परां बुद्धिं ज्ञात्वा मेहादविमुच्यते || येन येन शरीरेण करोत्ययमनीश्वरः | तेनतेन शरीरेण तदवश्यमुपाश्नुते | मानसं मनसाऽऽप्नोतिशरीरं च शरीरवान्||'.

Hearing these words spoken by *Vaishampayana*, *Janamejaya* wonders whether he too would be able to see his father *Pariskhita* again in the same form. On *Vyasa* being pleaded in this matter, *Janamejaya* is blessed by the presence of his father. Thereafter, he gives bath to his father and worships him, and *Parikshit* pleased partipates in the sacrifice and thereafter returns back to heavens thereafter 'ममापि वरदो व्यासो दर्शयत्पितरं यदि | तद्रूपवेषवयसं श्रद्ध्यां सर्वमेव ते || प्रियं मे स्यात्कृतार्थश्च स्यमहं कृतनिश्चयः | प्रसादादृषिमुख्यस्य मम कामः समृध्यताम्||...ततस्तद्रूपवयसमागतं नृपतिं दिवः | श्रीमन्तं पितरं राज ददर्श जनमेजयः ||...ततः सोऽवभृथे राजा मुदितो जनमेजयः | पितरं स्नापयामास स्वयं सस्नौ च पार्थिवः || पृक्षिदपि तत्रैव बबूव स तिरोहितः ||'.

Chapter XVII

After having the wonderful experience of seeing his deceased sons, elders and kings again, *Dhritarashtra* becomes freed from sorrow. As he was returning to his hermitage with *Yudhishthira* and his brothers following him, he is joined by *Vyasa*, who advises him that having realized that his sons have all reached other worlds according to the actions performed by them, and having received words of wisdom from *Narada* and others and also being served by *Yudhishthira* well, he should now them all to go and rule their kingdom.

Dhritarashtra acknowledges that both he and *Gandhari* have been treated with consideration and respect by *Yudhishthira* and his brothers. But seeing his kith and kin all again in their old forms makes their penance and austerities unsteady and insecure. He and like him living only on leaves, *Gandhari* and *Kunti* also do not desire to live long. Therefore, from that moment onwards, the entire responsibility of offering oblations to the ancestors would rest entirely on him, therefore, he should live and rule the lands for a long time, 'अजानशत्रो भद्र ते श्रुणु मे भातृभिः सह | त्वत्प्रसादान्महीपाल शोको नास्मानपबाधते ||..प्राप्तं पुत्रफलं त्वत्तः पीतिर्मे परमा त्वयि | न मे मन्युर्महाबाहो गम्यतां पुत्र मा चिरम्|| भवन्तं चेह सम्प्रेक्ष्य तपो मे परिहीयते | तपोयुक्तं शरीरं च त्वां दृष्ट्वा धारितं पुनः ||..त्वय्यद्य पिण्डः कीर्तिश्च कुलं चेदं प्रतिष्ठितम्| श्वो वाद्य वा महाबाहो गम्यतां पुत्र मा चिरम्||'. *Yudhishthira* still pleads that let all his brothers and servants leave him but he will stay with them to serve them in their old age 'न मामर्हसि धर्मज्ञ परित्यक्तुमनागसम्|| कामं गच्छन्तु मे सर्वे भ्रातरोऽनुचरास्तथा | भवन्तमहमन्विष्यं मातरं च यतव्रतः ||'. *Gandhari* intervening tells him that entire *Kuru* family is now dependent on him. Whatever he has done for them is more than enough. Therefore, he should do as *Dhritarashtra* tells him. Because listening fatherly advice is more meritorious than anything else - 'त्वय्यधीनं कुरुकुलं पिण्डश्च श्वशुरस्य मे || गम्यतां पुत्र पर्याप्तमेतावत् पूजिता वयम्| राजा यदाह तत्कार्यं त्वया पुत्र पितुर्वचः ||.

Yudhishthira thereafter turning to *Kunti* pleads with her that he will not interfere with their penance because there is nothing more auspicious then penance, therefore he should be permitted to be near and serve them. He tells her that his mind is not attracted by pleasures of kingdom since all relatives and companions are destroyed and the kingdom is safe only because *Krishna's* grace is on them 'न चोत्सहे तपोविघ्नं कर्तुं ते धर्मचारिणि | तपसो हि परं नास्ति तपसा विन्दते महत्|| ममापि न तथा राज्ञि राज्ये बुद्धिर्यथा पुरा | तपस्येवानुरक्तं मे मनः सर्वात्मना तथा || शून्येयं च मही कृत्स्ना न मे प्रीतिकरी शुभे | बान्धवाः न परिक्षीणा बलं नो न यथा पुरा ||..केवलं वृष्णिचक्रं च वासुदेवपरिग्रहात्||'. *Kunti* tells them that if he stays with them it will interfere with their penance due to the attachment which they have for them. They have only few years to live which they would like to spend with complete detachment 'उपरोधो भवेदेवमस्माकं तपसः कृते | त्वत्स्नेहपाशबद्धा च्चा हेयंय तपसः परात्|| तस्मात्पुत्रक गच्छ त्वं शिष्टमल्पं च नः प्रभो |'. Hearing these words *Yudhishthira* and brothers return to *Hastinaapura* with their blessings but with sorrowful heart.

Soon years months pass in years and *Narada* comes one day and informs *Yudhishthira* that after he left *Dhritarashtra* he performed austerities living without food and only on air, *Gandhari* was living only on water and *Kunti* eating only once during the day. *Dhritarashtra* did not settle in one place but moved from place to place, therefore was rarely seen. *Gandhari*, *Kunti* and *Sanjaya* followed in his searching him. When there a great fire rages, Dhritarashtra prevails upon *Sanjaya* to go safety leaving them to be consumed by fire and go to the supreme worlds. Having abandoned every thing, at this stage nothing is palatable except death. Death by water, fire and wind is commended for one who is a recluse therefore, *Sanjaya* should not grieve. Then facing east, he along with *Gandhari* and *Kunti* restrained their breath and mind on *Brahman*, soon all the three to be consumed by fire and reduced to ashes. When *Narada* was wandering in the forest thereafter, he saw their three bodies and the sages staying nearby identified without showing any grief on their death, since they were in no doubt about their noble end 'आतस्थे स तपस्तीव्रं पिता तव तपोधनः | वीटा मुखे समाधाय वायुभक्षोऽभवन्मुनिः || गान्धारी तु जलाहारा कुन्ती मासोपवासिनी | संजयः षष्ठभुक्तेन वर्तयामास

भारत || अनिकेतोऽथ राजा स बभूव वनगोचरः | ते चापि सहिते देव्यौ संजयश्च तमन्वयुः ||.. अथ वायुः समद्भूतो दावाग्निरभवन्महान्| ददाह तद्वनं सर्वं परिगृह्य समन्ततः || ततः स नृपतिर्दृष्ट्वा वह्निमायान्तमन्तिकात्|| इदमाह ततः सूतं संजयं जयतां वर | गच्छ संजय यत्राग्निर्न त्वं दहति कर्हिचित्|| वयमत्राग्निना युक्ता गमिष्यामः परां गतिम्|..प्राङ्गमुखः सह गान्धार्या कुन्त्या चोपविशत्तदा | गान्धारी च महाभागा जननी च पृथा तव || दावाग्निना समायुक्ते स च राजा पिता तव |..एवं स निधनं प्राप्तः कुरुराजो महामनाः ऽऽ गान्धारी च पृथा चैव जनन्यौ ते विशाम्पतेः ऽ यदृच्छयानुव्रजता मया राज्ञः कलेवरम्|| तयोश्च देव्योरुभयोर्मया दृष्टानि भारत | ततस्तपोवने तस्मिन् समाजग्मुस्तपोधनाः || श्रुत्वा राज्ञस्तदा निष्ठां न त्वशोचन्गतिश्च ते |'. Hearing this report *Pandavas* become extremely grieved and performed the necessary funeral ceremonies with due rites and rituals.

Soon days pass and *Yudhishthira* rules the kingdom for thirty six years thereafter. He observes strange events and signs like rain storms lashing with thunder and lightening, accompanied by intermittent hail storms. Large streams were seen flowing under desert sands; meteors were falling across the sky and volcanoes were spewing fire from the bowels of the earth 'षट्त्रिंशे त्वथ सम्प्राप्ते वर्षे कौरवनन्दनः | ददर्श विपरीतानि निमित्तानि युधिष्ठिरः || ववुर्वाताश्च निर्घाता रूक्षाः शर्करवर्षिणः | अपसव्यानि शकुना मण्डलानि प्रचक्रिरे || प्रत्यगूहुर्महानद्यो दिशो नीहारसंवृताः | उल्काश्चाङ्गारवर्षिण्यः प्रापतन्गगनाद्भुवि || आदित्यो रजसा राजन्समवच्छन्नमण्डलः | विरश्मिरुदये नित्यं कबन्धैः समदृश्यत ||...एते चान्ये च बहव उत्पाता भयशंसिनः | दृश्यन्ते बहवो राजन्हृदयोद्वेगकारकाः ||'. Soon *Yudhishthira* receives the reports that with grinding stone made of iron becoming the instrument, *Vrishnis,* save *Krishna* and *Balarama*, got themselves destroyed 'शुश्राव वृष्णिचक्रस्य मौसले कदनं कृतम्|| विमुक्तं वासुदेवं च श्रुत्वा रामं च पाण्डवः |'. Hearing that by the curse issued by *Brahmins Vrishnis* fought amongst them selves and were destroyed *Pandavas* were greatly disturbed remarking *Krishna's* death would be like drying the ocean निधनं वासुदेवस्य समुद्रस्येव शोषणम्.

It appears that when *Vishvamitra*, *Kanva*, *Narada* and other seers and sages had arrived in *Dvaraka*, *Vrishnis*, *Andhakas*, *Bhojas* and *Yadavas* due to the intoxicants taken by them and arrogance played a trick on them. At that time *Krishna's* son, *Samba* was dressed like a pregnant woman and was brought before them, with an iron grinding stone concealed under his dress, inquiring whether the babe would be a male or a female - 'इयं स्त्री पुत्रकामस्य बभ्रोरमिततेजसः | ऋषयः साधु जानीत किमियं जनयिष्यति ||'. Seer saw the deception being played on them and declared that the child born will bring destruction of the entire race of *Vrishnis-Andhakas*, save *Balarama* who will depart to the ocean giving up his body and *Krishna* will be killed by a hunter - 'वृष्ण्यन्धकविनाशाय मुसलं घोरमायसम्| वासुदेवस्य दायादः साम्बोऽयं जनयिष्यति || येन यूयं सुदुर्वृत्ता नृशंसा जातमन्यवः | उच्छेत्तारः कुलं कृत्स्नमृते रामजनार्दनौ || समुद्रं यास्यति श्रीमांस्त्यक्त्वा देहं हलायुधः | जरा कृष्णं महात्मानं शयानं भुवि भेत्स्यति ||'. Cursing in this manner the agitated sages went to *Krishna* and reported the events, when *Krishna* told *Vrishni-Andhakas* that events will take the course as the sages have predicted.

Even though *Krishna* was the lord of all creation, he did not interfere in the course which Time was taking. The subsequent day, *Samba* delivered an iron ball shaped like a grinding stone, which was to become the instruments for destruction of their race. Frightened of the prospects, they went to *Ugrasena* and handed over the same to him. Being saddened by their action, he advised them to break it in small pieces and strew them in the sea. Thereafter *Ugrasena*, *Krishna*, and *Balarama*, realizing that intoxicant drink was the cause of the unpardonable act, declare that thence forward the inhabitants of *Dvaraka* will no longer consume intoxicants and if any one breaks they will be killed along with their companions 'अद्यप्रभृति सर्वेषु वृष्ण्यन्धककुलेष्विह || सुरासवो न कर्तव्यः सर्वनगरवासिभिः | यश्च नोऽविदितं कुर्यात्पेयं कश्चिन्नरः क्वचित्| जीवन्स शूलमारोहेत्स्वयं कृत्वा सबान्धवः ||'.

Even as attempts were thus made to minimize the effect of the curse, inexorable *Time* was seen taking its own course, entering the homes of every one, with frightening forms, like a dark complexioned person with tonsured head, making himself some times invisible 'एवं प्रयतमानानां वृष्णीनामन्धकैः सह | कालो गृहाणि सर्वेषां परिचक्राम नित्यशः || करालो विकटो मुण्डः पुरुषः कृष्णपिङ्गलः | गृहाण्यावेक्ष्य वृष्णीनां नादृश्यत क्वचित्क्वचित्||'. *Time* had taken sweeping turn, stormy winds blowing day after day. Rats and rodents began moving on the roads with increased abundance. Strange events took place like asses being born to cows. The effect on *Vrishni-Andhakas* was disastrous, continuing to commit ignoble and evil deeds without any inhibition and shame, despising *Brahmins*, ancestors and gods. Spouses were seen deceiving each other. No respect was shown either to teacher or to elders, save *Krishna* and *Balarama*. When *Panchajanya* was

sounded asses would bray 'उत्पेदिरे महावाता दारुणाश्च दिने दिने |...विवृद्धमूपिका रथ्या विभिन्नमणिकास्तथा |...नापत्रपन्त पापानि कुर्वन्तो वृष्णयस्तदा | प्राद्विषन्ब्राह्मणांश्चापि पितॄन् देवांस्तथैवच || गुरूंश्चाप्यवमन्यन्त न तु रामजनार्दनौ | पत्न्यः पतीनुच्चरन्त पतिश्च पतयस्त्था || नन्दतं पाञ्चजन्यं च वृष्ण्यन्धकनिवेशने | समन्तात्पर्यवाशन्त रासभा दारुणस्वराः ||'.

Seeing the evil omens, *Krishna* realizes that *Time* has truly taken a vicious turn and warned his people that similar signs were seen when *Bharata* war was about to commence. Suddenly it struck him that thirty six years have passed since the great war ended, whereupon *Gandhari* had uttered her ominous curse on his people. Therefore, he suggests *Vrishni-Andhakas* and other associate clans to shift their residence to *Prabahas* the pilgrim centre on the sea shore 'एवं पश्यनहृषीकेशः सम्प्राप्तं कालपर्ययम्| त्रयोदश्याममावास्यां तान्दृष्ट्वा प्राब्रवीदाम्|| चतुर्दशी पञ्चदशी कृतेयं राहुणा पुनः | प्राप्ते वै भारते युद्धं प्राप्ता चाद्य क्षयाय नः || विमृशन्नेव कालं तं परिचिन्त्य जनार्दनः | मेने प्राप्तं स षट्त्रिंशं वर्षं वै केशीसूदनः || पुत्रशोकाभिसंतप्ता गन्धारी हतबान्धवा | यदनुव्याजहारार्ता तदिदं समुपागतम्||.. इत्युक्त्वा वासुदेवस्तु चिकीर्षुः सत्यमेव तत्| आज्ञापयामास तदा तीर्थयात्रामरिंदमः || अघोपयन्त पुरुषास्तत्र केशवशासनात्| तीर्थयात्रा समुद्रे वः कार्येति पुरुषर्षाः ||'.

Soon a queer event takes place in *Dvaraka*. A dark complexioned woman appears in their sleep grinding her white teeth and running around the sacrificial pillar which was established when *Dvaraka* was first founded. Vultures swooped down hovering from the sky, even as all symbols of prosperity appear to be robbed by *rakshasas*. Discus presented by *Agni* to *Krishna* vanishes in space, along with the resplendent chariot with the horses, even as *Daruka* sees celestial nymphs taking away the flag and other emblems and insignia 'काली स्त्री पाण्डुरैर्दन्तैः प्रविश्य हसती निशि | स्त्रियः स्वप्नेषु मुष्णन्ती द्वारकां परिधावति || अग्निहोत्रनिकेतेषु वास्तुमध्येषु वेश्मसु | वृष्ण्यन्धकानखादन्त स्वप्ने गृध्रा भयानकाः || अलंकाराश्च छत्रं च ध्वजाश्च कवचानि च | ह्रियमाणान्यदृश्यन्त रक्षोभिः सुभयानकैः || तच्चाग्निदत्तं कृष्णस्य वज्रनाभमयोमयम्| दिवमाचक्रमे वृष्णीनां पश्यतां तदा || युक्तं रथं दिव्यमादित्यवर्णं हय हरन्पश्यतो दारुकस्य | ते सागरस्योपरिष्टादवर्तन् मनोजवाश्चतुरो वाजिमुख्याः || तालः सुपर्णश्च महाध्वजौ तौ सुपूजितौ रामजनार्दनाभ्याम्|'.

But all these sign had no effect on *Vrishni-Andhakas* even as they were preparing their departure, without any sense of discrimination or decency in conduct. They had taken various kinds of food, eatables and beverage, intoxicants and different types of flesh. Even the women who accompanied them seem to be happy arranging for food and other materials. When *Uddhava* well established in equanimity, observed these activities, he requested *Krishna* to allow him to depart from the place, it was not denied, since *Krishna* knew that end of *Vrishni-Andhakas-Yadavas* was soon to come, 'ततो भोज्यं च भक्ष्यं च पेयं चान्धकवृष्णयः | बहु नानाविधं चक्रुर्मद्यं मांसमनेकशः ||..ततः प्रभासे न्यवसन्यथोद्दिष्टं यथागृहम्| प्रभूतभक्ष्यपेयास्ते सदारा यादवास्तदा || निविष्टांस्तान् निशम्याथ समुद्रान्ते स योगवित्| जगामामन्त्र्य तान्वीरानुद्धवोऽर्थविशारदः || न प्रस्थितं महात्मानमभिवाद्य कृताञ्जलीम्| जानन्विनाशं वृष्णीनां नैच्छद् वारयितुं हरिः |'. When *Vrishni-Andhakas-Yadavas* saw *Uddhava* leave *Dvaraka*, they enveloped in ignorance and obscurity, were seen mixing intoxicants in the food prepared for *Brahmins* and distributing the same to the misguided people who were no better than apes and monkeys. Soon music started blaring and people began dancing in revelry. *Balarama*, *Kritavarma*, *Satyaki*, *Gada* and *Babhru* were seen consuming intoxicants without any concern or inhibition, in the very presence of *Krishna*,- 'ब्राह्मणार्थेषु यत्सिद्धमन्नं तेषां महात्मनाम्| तद्वानरेभ्यः प्रददुः सुरागन्धसमन्वितम्|| ततस्तूर्यशताकीर्णं नटनर्तनसंकुलम्| अवर्तत महापानं प्रभासे तिग्मतेजसाम्|| कृष्णस्य संनिधौ रामः सहितः कृतवर्मणा | अपिबद्युयुधानश्च गदो बभ्रुस्तथैव च ||.

Soon drunken brawl starts within *Vrishni-Andhakas-Yadavas* themselves, each one teasing others contemptuously, boasting how each one had defeated their enemies. In intoxicated mood, *Satyaki* mockingly congratulates *Kritaverma* and scorns him about his brave deed when he killed *Draupadi's* sons in their sleep, reminding him that *Yadavas* will never pardon him for that act. *Pradyumna* sitting nearby praised *Satyaki's* actions and commended his words. Incensed by these invectives, *Kritaverma* retorted angrily about *Satyaki's* own actions in dismembering *Bhurishava's* shoulders when he was unarmed and in *Yoga*. *Krishna* nearby hearing these accusations, growled angrily at *Kritaverma*. When *Satyaki* narrated the incident when for getting *Symanatka* jewel *Kritavarma* had killed *Satrajit*, *Satyabhama Krishna's* wife and *Satrajit's* daughter, feeling humiliated departs crying copiously, making Krishna further infuriated. Seeing her cry, *Satyaki* rushes towards *Kritavarma* shouting that he will kill him for having helped *Ashvatthama* in getting *Druapadi's* sons killed. He snatches the sword

lying near *Krishna* and severs *Kritaverma's* head. A great commotion follows each one trying to kill the other, even as *Krishna* was restraining them - 'कः क्षत्रियोऽहन्यमानः सुप्तान्हन्यान्मृतानिव | तन्न मृष्यन्ति हार्दिक्य यादवा यत्त्वया कृतम्|| इत्युक्ते युयुधानेन पूजयामास तद्वचः | प्रद्युम्नो रथिनां श्रेष्ठो हार्दिक्यमवमन्य च || ततः परमसंक्रुद्धः कृतवर्मा तामब्रवीत्|..भूरिश्रवाश्छिन्नबाहुर्युद्धे प्रायगतस्त्वया | वधेन सुनृशंसेन कथं वीरेण पातितः || इति तस्य वचः श्रुत्वा केशवः परवीरहा | तिर्यक्सरोषया दृष्ट्या वीक्षांचक्रे स मन्युमान्|| मणिः स्यमन्तकश्चैव यः स सत्राजितोऽभवत्| तां कथां श्रावयामास सात्यकिर्मधुसूदनम्|| तच्छ्रुत्वा केशवस्याङ्कमगमद्रुदती तदा | सत्यभामा प्रकुपिता कोपयन्ती जनार्दनम्|| तत उत्थाय सक्रोधः सात्यकिर्वाक्यमब्रवीत्| पञ्चानां द्रौपदेयानां धृष्टद्युम्नशिखण्डिनोः || एष गच्छामि पदवीं सत्येन च तथा शपे | सौप्तिके ये च निहताः सुप्ता येन दुरात्मना || द्रोणपुत्रसहायेन पापेन कृतवर्मणा | समाप्तमायुरस्याद्य यशश्चैव सुमध्यमे || इत्येवमुक्त्वा खड्गेन केशवस्य समीपतः | अभिद्रुत्य शिरः क्रुद्धश्चिच्छेद कृतवर्मणः || तथान्यानपि निघ्नन्तं युयुधानं समन्ततः | अभ्यधावद्धृषीकेशो विनिवारयितुं तदा ||'.

Krishna had spoken in *Bhagavad Gita*, that as *Time*, grown mature destroying the worlds, he had already killed *Bhishma*, *Drona*, *Karna* and others making *Arjuna* and others as mere instruments. But here *Time* seems to have taken upon himself the task of misguiding *Vrishni-Andhakas-Yadavas* obscuring their mind. Seeing *Bhojas* and *Andhakas* swooping together on *Satyaki* with the soiled plates used for meals, *Krishna* realizing that the turn of events is due the machination and subterfuge initiated by *Time*, refrained from intervening, as he would otherwise would have done. Every one was becoming agitated under the influence of the intoxicants, and *Time* taking the form of *Death* was encouraging them 'एकीभूतास्ततः सर्वे कालपर्यायचोदिताः | भोजान्धका महाराज शैनेयं पर्यवारयन्|| तान्दृष्ट्वा पततस्तूर्णमभिक्रुद्धाञ्जनार्दनः | न चुक्रोध महातेजा जानन् कालस्य पर्ययम्|| ते तु पानमदाविष्टाश्चोदिताः कालधर्मणा | युयुधानमथाभ्यघ्नन्नुच्छिष्टैर्भाजनैस्तदा ||'.

When they swoop on under excessive intoxication to kill *Satyaki, Pradyumna* too jumps in the fray soon thereafter. But since the opposition was stronger both *Satyaki* and *Pradyumna* are killed. *Krishna* could remain no longer quiet. Becoming angry he picks up the grass on the shore, which assumes in his hand the form of sharp weapon to kill them even at they took use the same grass to kill others - 'हन्यमाने तु शैनेये क्रुद्धो रुक्मिणिनन्दनः | तदनन्तरमागच्छन्मोक्षयिष्यन्शिनेः सुतम्|| स भोजैः सह संयुक्तः सात्यकिश्चान्धकैः सह | व्यायच्छमानौ तौ वीरौ बाहुद्रविणशालिनौ || बहुत्वान्निहतौ तत्र उभौ कृष्णस्य पश्यतः | हतं दृष्ट्वा च शैनेयं पुत्रं च यदुनन्दनः || एरकाणां ततो मुष्टिं कोपाज्जग्राह केशवः | तदभून्मुसलं घोरं वज्रकल्पमयोमयम्|| जघान कृष्णस्तांस्तेन ये ये प्रमुखतोऽभवन्| ततोऽन्धकाश्च भोजश्च शैनेया कृष्णयस्तथा || जघ्नुरन्योन्यमाक्रन्दे मुसलैः कालचोदिताः |'.

Thereafter, a large-scale battle, with chaos and anarchy everywhere begins, father killing son and son killing the father, brothers killing each others, no one even thinking withdrawing from that place. When finally *Krishna* sees his sons *Samba*, *Charudeshna* and his grandson *Aniruddha* also being killed, he looses all sense of compassion and destroys rest of the *Vrishnis*, *Andhakas*, *Bhojas* and *Yadavas* 'अवधीत्पितरं पुत्रः पिता पुत्रं च भारत || मत्ताः परिपतन्ति स्म योधयन्तः परस्परम्| पतङ्गा इव चाग्नौ ते निपेतुः कुकुरान्धकाः || नासीत्पलायने बुद्धिर्वध्यमानस्य कस्यचित्| तत्रापश्यन्महाबाहुर्जानन्कालस्य पर्ययम्|| मुसलं समवष्टभ्य तस्थौ स मधुसूदनः | साम्बं च निहतं दृष्ट्वा चारुदेष्णं च माधवः || प्रद्युम्नं चानिरुद्धं च ततश्चुक्रोध भारत | गदं वीक्ष्य शयानं च भृशं कोपसमन्वितः || स निःशेषं तदा चक्रे शार्ङ्गचक्रगदाधरः ||'. Seeing the mass destruction of the race, *Babhru* and *Daruka* hesitatingly approach *Krishna* and report to him the death of all his relatives, many of them killed by his own hands. Therefore, they should now find out where *Balarama* is present, not having seen him among them - 'भगवन्निहताः सर्वे त्वया भूयिष्टशो नराः | रामस्य पदमन्विच्छ तत्र गच्छाम यत्र सः ||'.

Then *Krishna* along with *Babhru* and *Daruka* go in search of *Balarama* and find him sitting under a huge tree reflecting and thinking of the events that have transpired. *Krishna* sends *Daruka* instantly to *Hastinapura* to report to *Panadvas* the annihilation of the *Vrishni*, *Andhaka*, *Bhoja* and *Yadavas* clans and to fetch *Arjuna* to *Dvaraka*. Then he asks *Babhru* to return to *Dvaraka*, lest in their absence robbers may steal wealth from the hapless women. But when *Babhru* still under the influence of the events that had transpired, decides to go to *Dvaraka*, he is hit by one of the pieces of the iron stuck to a hunter arrow and dies on the way 'अथापश्यन्राममनन्तवीर्यं वृक्षे स्थितं चिन्तयानं विविक्ते || ततः समासाद्य महानुभावं कृष्णस्तदा दारुकमन्वशासत्| गत्वा कुरून्सर्वमिमं महान्तं पार्थाय शंसस्व वधं यदूनाम्||..ततो गते दारुके केशवोऽथ दृष्ट्वान्तिके बभ्रुमुवाच वाक्यम्| स्त्रीयां भवान्रक्षितुं यातु शीघ्रं नैता हिंसुर्दस्यवो वित्तलोभात्|| स प्रस्थितः केशवेनानुशिष्टो मदातुरं ज्ञातिवधार्दितश्च | तं विश्रन्तं संनिधौ केशवस्य दुरन्तामेकं सहसैव बभूम्|| ब्रह्मानुशप्तमवधीन्महद्वै कूटे युक्तं मुसलं लुब्धकस्य |'.

Telling *Balarama* to remain in the same place till he returns, *Krishna* goes back to *Dvaraka* to make proper arrangements for the safety of women and children, 'इहैव त्वं मां प्रतीक्षस्व राम यावत्स्त्रीयो ज्ञातिवशाः करोमि |'.

He arranges the remaining population under the care of his father till *Arjuna* arrives, telling him that a great destruction similar to the one after *Mahabharata* war is to come, therefore, he does not desire to return to *Dvaraka*.. Then he returns to *Balarama* to perform penance along with him, since all the remaining *Yadavas* too would be destroyed 'स्त्रियो भवान्रक्षतु नः समग्रा धनंजयस्यागमनं प्रतीक्षन्| रामो वनान्ते प्रतिपाल्यन्मामास्तेऽद्याहं तेन समागमिष्ये || दृष्टं मयेदं निधनं यदूनां राज्ञां च पूर्वं कुरुपुङ्गवानाम्| नाहं विना यदुभिर्यादवानां पुरीमिमामशकं द्रष्टुमद्य || तपश्चरिष्यामि निबोध तन्मे रामेण सार्धं वनमभ्युपेत्य | '. When he returns he sees *Balarama* sitting in a yogic position, giving up his gross *form* and his true *essence* as शेष, issuing forth from his mouth with thousand heads spreading far and wide like a mountain. When he slides towards the ocean he is received with due respect by innumerable *nagas* like *Karkotaka, Vasuki, Takshaka* and others along wit the divine *Varuna* the lord of the oceans 'ततो गत्वा केशवस्तं ददर्श रामं वनेस्थितमेकम् विविक्ते || अथपश्यद्योगयुक्तस्य तस्य नागं मुखान्निश्चरन्तं महान्तम्| श्वेतं ययौ स ततः प्रेक्षमाणो महार्णवो येन महानुभावः || सहास्रशीर्षः पर्वतभोगवर्ष्मा रक्ताननः स्वां तनुं तां विमुच्य | सम्यक् च तं सागतः प्रतिगृह्यान्नागा दिव्याः सरितश्चैव पुण्याः ||'.

Seeing even his brother parting company with him, *Krishna* wanders alone in the forest reflecting on the events that has led to annihilation of *Vrishni*, *Andhaka*, *and Bhoja* and *Yadava.* Then recollecting *Gandhari's* curse he considers that time has come for him also to depart to his eternal and supreme place. Then *Krishna*, the living embodiment of righteousness and Wisdom and immortal godhead, having taken descent in human *form* for the protection of the three worlds, decides to withdrew his *divine essence*, his mind, speech and breath from the temporal *Krishna-form* - 'ततो गते भ्रातरि वासुदेवो जानन् सर्व गतयो दिव्यदृष्टिः || वने शून्ये विचरंश्चिन्तयानो भूमौ वाथ संविवेशाग्र्यतेजाः | सर्वं तेन प्राक्तदा वित्तमासीद्गान्धार्या यद्वाक्यमुक्तः स पूर्वम्||..मेने ततः संक्रमणस्य कालं ततश्चकारेन्द्रियसंनिरोधम्| तथा च लोकत्रयपालनार्थमात्रेयवाक्यप्रतिपालनाय || देवोऽपि सन्देहविमोक्षहेतोर्निमित्तमैच्छत्सकलार्थ तत्त्ववित्| स संनिरुद्धेन्द्रियवाङ्मनास्तु शिश्ये महायोगमुपेत्य कृष्णः ||'. When he was sitting thus unmoving on the ground, reclining himself against the tree for support, a hunter who was passing by, sees *Krishna's* lotus foot and mistaking it to be the ear of a deer, shoots his arrow. Coming nearer, he realizes that the one whom he has shot the arrow was no one other than *Krishna* himself. When he sees him in his resplendent form with four arms and wearing a yellow garment and in the state of complete communion, he realizes that a great offense has committed by him and fears retribution. But *Krishna* opens his eyes compassionately assures him his safety 'जरथ तं देशमुपाजगाम लुब्धस्तदानीं मृगलिप्सुरुग्रः | स केशवं योगयुक्तं शयानं मृगासक्तो लुब्धकः सायकेन || जराविध्यत्पादतले त्वरावांस्तं चाभितस्तज्जिघृक्षुर्जगाम ऽ अथापश्यत्पुरुषं योगयुक्तं पीताम्बरं लुब्धकोऽनेकबाहुम्|| मत्वाऽऽत्मानं त्वपराद्धं स तस्य पादौ जरा जगृहे शंकितात्मा |'.

Thereafter, assuming his luminous and resplendent subtle form with divine essence he departed to his supreme sphere in space, *Vaikuntha* even as *Indra, Rudra, Aditya, Ashvins, Vasus, Seers, Adepts*, celestial ladies and *Gandharvas* were waiting with all the gods to welcome him and offer obeisance. Thus the *One*, who was the origin of all the creation, luminous in his inestimable grandeur, the eternal *Yogi, Sriman Narayana* entered his eternal dwelling place, encompassing the whole creation with earth, space and the heavens and yet transcending them by ten measures, illuminating them with his essence - 'अश्वासयंस्तं महात्मा तदानीं गच्छन्नूर्ध्वं रोदसी व्याप्य लक्ष्म्या || दिवं प्राप्तं वासवोऽथाश्विनौ च रुद्रादित्या वसवश्चाथ विश्वे | प्रत्युद्ययुर्मुनयश्चापि सिद्धा गन्धर्वमुख्याश्च सहाप्सरोभिः || ततो राजन्भगवानुग्रतेजा नारायणः प्रभवश्चाव्ययश्च | योगाचार्यो रोदसी व्याप्य लक्ष्म्या स्थानं प्राप स्वं महात्माप्रमेयम्||. *Krishna's* legend does not end with the departure eternal and immortal *Krishna-Consciousness* from transient and mortal *Krishna-form.* Even as there was innumerable *Krishna-form* earlier there would also be *Krishna-form* in with essence in same or similar intensity transcending people, place and periods.

Hearing the shocking news of his departure to *Vaikuntha, Pandavas* sink in sorrow, with mind becoming disturbed and hearts. *Krishna's* dear friend *Arjuna*,, departs post haste to *Dvaraka* as summoned, wondering that such thing could ever have had happened. On reaching he observes the city bereft of the benevolent resplendence of *Krishna*, loosing his sheet anchor was like a woman newly widowed, ददर्श द्वारकां वीरो मृतनाथमिव स्त्रियम्|. Without *Krishna* and *Balarama, Dvaraka* was like river *Vaitarini* that one crosses to reach the abode of *Death. Dvaraka* was looking listless like lotus in winter 'श्रुत्वा

विनष्टान्वार्ष्णेयान्सभोजान्धककौकुरान्| पाण्डवाः शोकसंतप्ता वित्रस्तमनसोऽभवन्||...गमकृष्णमहाग्राहां द्वारकां सतिं तदा | कालपाशग्रहां भीमां नदीं वैतरिणीमिव || ददर्श वासविर्धीमान्विहीनां वृष्णिपुङ्गवैः | गतश्रियं निरानन्दां पृथिवीं शिशिरे यथा ||'.

Then, *Arjuna* goes to *Krishna's* old father, who laments that his life is worthless since *Krishna* who has won victories over many enemies is not to be seen any more 'यैर्जिता भूमिपालाश्च दैत्याश्च शतशोऽर्जुन | तान्दृष्ट्वा नेह पश्यामि जीवाम्यर्जुन दुर्मरः ||'. Then the grief-stricken father narrates the details how end came to *Dvaraka,* holding *Pradyumna, Satyaki, Kritaverma* and *Akrura* responsible for the beginning of the extermination of the family or perhaps the curse of the sages with inexorable *Time* itself initiating with *Krishna* not wanting to falsify the words spoke by *Gandhari* remaining silent spectator and witness to his race being exterminated. Therefore, *Krishna* did not revive them as he had done *Parikshita* earlier with his extra-ordinary powers 'प्रत्यपश्यच्च स विभुर्ज्ञातिक्षयमधोक्षजः || समुपेक्षितवान्नित्यं स्वयं स मम पुत्रकः | गान्धार्या वचनं यत्तदृषीणां चा परंतप || तन्नूनमन्यथा कर्तुं नैच्छत्स जगतः प्रभुः | प्रत्यक्षं भवतश्चापि तव पौत्रः परंतप || अश्वत्थाम्ना हतश्चापि जीवितस्तस्य तेजसा | इमांस्तु नैच्छत्स्वाञ्ज्ञातीन्रक्षितुं च सखा तव ||'. The old father told *Arjuna* that before he left *Dvaraka*, *Krishna* had told him that a message has been sent to *Arjuna* and when he comes he will take care of them, further telling him that *Krishna* and *Arjuna* are same and similar, therefore they should following his instructions 'योऽहं तमर्जुनं विद्धि योऽर्जुनः सोऽहमेव तु | यद्ब्रूयात्तत्तथा कार्यमिति बुद्ध्यस्व माधव ||'. *Arjuna* would take the women and the children away to safety because soon *Dvaraka* would sink in the sea and *Krishna* himself was to go with *Balarama* to some distant place to spend the remaining years of their lives.

Then *Arjuna* told his uncle that without *Krishna* and *Balarama* he would also not like to live any more. Undoubtedly, the moment of great transformation has come therefore he will take all the women and children to *Indraprastha* and enthrone *Vajra, Krishna's* grandson, since *Dvaraka* would soon drown in the ocean 'शक्रप्रस्थमहं नेष्ये वृष्ण्यन्धकजनं स्वयम्| इदं तु नगरं सर्वं समुद्रः प्लावयिष्यति || सज्जीकुरुत यानानि रत्नानि विविधानि च | वज्रोऽयं भवतां राजा शक्रप्रस्थे भविष्यति ||'. The subsequent day *Krishna's* father gives up his life even as his four wives join him on the pyre 'श्वोभूतेऽथ ततः शौरिर्वसुदेवः प्रतापवान्| युक्त्वाऽऽत्मानं महातेजा जगाम गतिमुत्तमम्|| ..तं देवी च भद्रा च रोहिणी मदिरा तथा | अन्वारोहन्त च तदा भर्तारं योषितां वराः ||'. *Arjuna* after performing their cremation ceremony, he goes in search of the bodies of *Krishna* and *Balarama* and after finding the bodies performs the funeral ceremonies and left on the seventh day with the women and children on his way to *Indraprastha* - 'ततः शरीरे रामस्य वासुदेवस्य चोभयोः | अन्विष्य दाहयामास पुरुषैराप्तकारिभिः || स तेषां विधिवत्कृत्वा प्रेतकार्याणि पाण्डवः | सप्तमे दिवसे प्रायाद्रथमारुह्य सत्वरः ||'.

It would be seen that *Vyasa* had accepted *Krishna's* human birth as natural and normal as those of any other characters in *Mahabharata,* giving importance to the temporal events in his life as he gave to those of all others. But unlike many others like *Duryodhana, Karna* and others who accepted him as one great human being, a statesman, and a men of wisdom renowned in three worlds, and others like *Bhishma, Vidura* and *Sanjaya* accepted him, as repeatedly informed by sages like *Markndeya, Vyasa, Narada* and others as the descent of seer *Narayana* who in earlier times had performed great penance, only few sages like *Markndeya, Vyasa, Narada* themselves having experienced the divine effulgence wholly, completely and in entirety in *Krishna* accepted him as the *Brahman* himself, not at the same time the human body in which he was born, needing all attention as a normal human would need to dispose of the temporal gross body.

On the seventh day, *Arjuna* leaves for his journey to *Indraprastha* with all the rest of *Yadavas*, taking *Vajra*, *Krishna's* grandson, with all the reaming wealth and possessions. The moment they leave *Dvaraka*, the city sinks deep in sea with all the possessions, every one wondering the course of divine dispensation. On the way seeing them approach laden with wealth and women, *Abhira dasyu* robbers became greedy and seeing *Arjuna* alone while they were many - 'ततो लोभः समभवद्दस्यूनां निहतेश्वराः | दृष्ट्वा स्त्रियो नीयमानाः पार्थेनैकेन भारत ||', they challenge *Arjuna,* who smilingly warns them saying if they value their life they should depart soon from his presence. But *Abhiras* rush to attack *Arjuna* with all their strength. When *Arjuna* lifts his *Gandeev* he is mortified to find that he can neither remember divine *mantras* nor fix arrows on his bow. Seeing his arrows discharged loose their power in their course, he is crestfallen

seeing *Abhiras* loot women and wealth. *Arjuna* becomes restless breathing hard, wondering at the turn off events 'ततोऽर्जुनो धनुर्दिव्यं गाण्डीवमजरं महत्। आरोपयितुमारेभे यत्नादिव कथंचन ॥ चकार मज्जं कृच्छ्रेण सम्भ्रमे तुमुले मति । चिन्तयामास शस्त्राणि न च सस्मार तान्यापि ॥ वैकृतं तन्महद्दृष्ट्वा भुजवीर्ये तथा युधि । दिव्यानां च महास्त्राणां विनाशाद्व्रीडितोऽभवत्॥..क्षणेन तस्य ते राजन्क्षयं जग्मुरजिह्मगाः । अक्षया हि पुरा भूत्वा क्षीणाः क्षतभोजनाः ॥..धनंजयस्तु दैवं तन्मनसाऽचिन्तयत्प्रभुः । दुःखशोकसमाविष्टो निःश्वासपरमोऽब्रवीत्॥ अस्त्राणां च प्रणाशेन बाहुवीर्यस्य संक्षयात्। धनुषश्चाविधेयत्वाच्छराणां संक्षयेण च ॥ बभूव विमनाः पार्थो दैवमित्यनुचिन्तयन्। न्यवर्तत ततो राजन्नेदमस्तीति चाब्रवीत्॥'. Finally protecting whatever wealth and women left, he reached *Indraprastha. Satyaki's* son *Yauyudhani* was established on the throne assigning him the territory on the banks of river *Sarasvati*, *Indrarashtha* was give to *Vajra*.

Akrura leaves to the forests for penance. Of *Krishna's* six wives *Rukmini*, *Gandhari*, *Shaivya*, *Hemavati* and *Jambuvanti* enter fire, *Satyabhama* alone going to the forest for performing penance and austerities 'रुक्मिणी त्वथ गान्धरी शैव्याहैमवतीत्यपि । देवी जम्बवन्ती चैव विविशुर्जातवेदसम्॥ सत्यभामा तथैवान्या देव्यः कृष्णस्य सम्मताः । वनं प्रविविशु राजंस्तापसे कृतनिश्चयः ॥'. After completing all the formalities, even *Arjuna* becomes confused with the events through which he has gone through. He goes to *Vyasa* for clarification and advice. When the sage inquires of him seeing dispirited as if defeated in battle, 'युद्धे पराजितो वासि गतश्रीरिव लक्ष्यसे ।', sadly informs him that *Krishna* whose form was similar to the dark clouds and eyes like lotus has along with *Balarama* has given up their bodies and gone to their dwelling place and therefore, not being able to have his resplendent company he has become dejected in mind 'यः स मेघवपुः श्रीमान्बृहत्पङ्कजलोचनः । स कृष्णः सह रामेण त्यक्त्वा देहं दिवं गताः । तद्वाक्यस्पर्शनालोकसुखं त्वामृतसंनिभम्। संस्मृत्य देवदेवस्य प्रमुह्याम्यमृतात्मनः ॥'.

Then he wonders how he could ever face death, exclaiming that as strange and unexpected as oceans becoming dry, or mountains moving from their foundations, or sky falling or fire losing its energy 'पुनः पुनर्न मृष्यामि विनाशममितौजसाम्। चिन्तयानो यदूनां च कृष्णस्य च यशस्विनः । शोषणं सागरस्येव पर्वतस्येव चालनम्॥ नभसः पतनं चैव शैत्यमग्नेस्तथैव च । अश्रद्धेयमहं मन्ये विनाशं शार्ङ्गधन्वनः ॥'. Therefore, he does not desire to live in this world without *Krishna*, recalling the events when *Abhiras* from the land of five rivers robbed *Vrishni* ladies in his very presence. Knowledge of different weapons was completely forgotten and all his arrows had lost their vigour. When he tried to lift his bow but he could not even fix arrows on his bow, as if his entire strength has become worn out. Hearing that *Krishna* has left, his mind has become confused and confounded not being to see *Krishna*, the immutable, steadfast and indescribable, the destroyer of enemies 'न चेह स्थातुमिच्छामि लोके कृष्णाविनकृतः । इतः कष्टतरं चान्यच्छृणु तद्वै तपोधन ॥ मनो मे दीर्यते येन चिन्तयानस्य वै मुहुः । पश्यतो वृष्णिदाराश्च मम ब्रह्मन्सहस्रशः ॥ आभीरैरनुसृत्याजौ हृताः पञ्चनदालयैः । धनुरादाय तत्राहं नाशकं तस्य पूरणे ॥ यथा पुरा च मे वीर्यं भुजयोर्न तथाभवत्। अस्त्राणि मे प्रणष्टानि विविधानि महामुने ॥ शराश्च क्षयमापन्नाः क्षणेनैव समन्ततः । पुरुषश्चाप्रमेयात्मा शङ्खचक्रगदाधरः ॥ चतुर्भुजः पीतवासाः श्याम पद्मदलेक्षणः ॥ यश्च याति पुरस्तान्मे रथस्य सुमहाद्युतिः ॥ प्रदहन्रिपुसैन्यानि न पश्याम्यहमच्युतम्॥..श्रुत्वैव हि गतं विष्णुं ममापि मुमुहुर्दिशः । प्रणष्टज्ञानिवीर्यस्य शून्यस्य परिधावतः ॥'.

The shock of his inability to save women and children from the savage attack by *Abhiras* had made *Arjuna* completely loose confidence even in himself, when earlier he had never doubted his own valour, prowess and competence, which his well-wishers had admired and enemies feared. Having told *Krishna* that even though he was well-known in all the three worlds and could destroy *Kauravas*, he himself was confident about his own confidence to defeat them single handed. He has asked *Krishna* to be his charioteer only because success follows him. At that time *Krishna* had smiled mysteriously and significantly but significance of that silence he has now become consciously aware that *Krishna* was the force and energy behind his every action, he being only the instrument. Therefore, he does desire to live any longer since without *Krishna* by his side, his valour in scorching enemies and all his wisdom and strength has vanished - 'पुरुषश्चाप्रमेयात्मा शङ्खचक्रगदाधरः ॥ चतुर्भुजः पीतवासाः श्यामः पद्मदलेक्षणः । यच्च याति पुरस्तान्मे रथस्य सुमहाद्युतिः ॥ प्रदहन्रिपुसैन्यानि न पश्याम्यहमाच्युतम्॥.. पुरनिर्विण्णचेताश्च शान्तिं नोपलभेऽपि च । विना जनार्दनं वीरं नाहं जीवितुमुत्सहे ॥ श्रुत्वैव हि गतं विष्णु ममपि मुमुहुर्दिशः । प्रणष्टज्ञातिवीर्यस्य शून्यस्य परिधावतः ॥'.

Vyasa tells him not to worry about annihilation of *Yadavas* since they were all born with specific *divine intent* and *purpose* and having fulfilled they have returned to their original place. Even as *Krishna* could have prevented their destruction, even as he could have protected the ladies but did not do so since they were cursed by sage *Ashthavakra* and now stand delivered. Even when riding with him as

friend and charioteer, Krishna was the ancient seer *Narayana* who made you his instrument for reducing the burden on earth - 'देवांशा देवदेवेन सम्मतास्ते गताः सह | धर्मव्यवस्थापनार्थं देवेन समुपेक्षिताः || ब्रह्मशापविनिर्दग्धा वृष्ण्यन्धकामहारथाः || विनष्टाः कुरुशार्दूल न ताञ्शोचितुमर्हसि | भवितव्यं तथा तच्च दिष्टमेदतन्महात्मनाम्|| उपेक्षितं च कृष्णेन शक्तेनापि व्यपोहितुम्| त्रैलोक्यमपि गोविन्दः कृत्स्नं स्थावरजङ्गमम्|| प्रसहेदन्यथाकर्तुं कुतः शापं महात्मनम्||..ग्यस्य पुरतो याति यः स चक्रगदाधरः || तव स्नेहात् पुराणर्षिर्वासुदेवश्चतुर्भुजः | कृत्वा भारावतरणं पृथिव्याः पृथुलोचनः || मोक्षयित्वा तनुं पाप्तः कृष्णः स्वस्थानमुत्तमम्| त्वयापिह महत्कर्म देवानां पुरुषर्षभ || . .कृतकृत्यांश्च वो मन्ये संसिद्धान्कुरुपुङ्गवः || गमनं प्राप्तकालं व इदं श्रेयस्करं विभो |'. He has fulfilled the assignment given here in the world and when the time comes he too will depart.

Then *Vyasa* reveals the profound and eternal significance of *Time* in operation as creation, evolution and dessolution. When creation becomes manifest, the intellect becomes energetic, enterprising and expansive; when creation is ready for dissolution, the intellect takes reverse course becoming lethargic, unresponsive and protective. *Time*, verily is the root of the primordial world and when Time decides the primordial world also lapses. Mighty in the beginning, it becomes weak in the end, having become the Ordainer it becomes the ordained one. The need for *Arjuna's* weapons having been fulfilled, they would soon return to the source and whenever their need arises, they would manifest again. Now the time has come for him to attain the supreme position and in that lies *Arjuna's* wellbeing 'कालमूलमिदं सर्वं जगद्बीजं धनंजय || काल एव समादत्ते पुनरेव यदृच्छया | स एव बलवान्भूत्वा पुनर्भवति दुर्बलः || स एवेशश्च भूत्वेह परैराज्ञाप्यते पुनः | कृतकृत्यानि चास्त्राणि गतान्यद्य यथागतम्|| पुनरेष्यन्ति ते हस्तं यदाकालो भविष्यति | कालो हन्तुं गतिं मुख्यां भवनामपि भारत || एयच्छ्रेयो हि वो मन्ये परमं भरतर्षभ |'. Hearing this sage advice *Arjuna* becomes satisfied and goes back to *Hastinapur*. Then acknowledging the truism, 'कालः पचति भूतानि सर्वाण्येव महामने | कालपाशमहं मन्ये त्वमपि द्रष्टुमर्हसि ||' *Yudhishthira* anoints his grandson *Parikshita* on the throne of *Hastinapura* and *Vajra*, *Krishna's* grandson on the throne of *Indraprastha*.

When *Yudhishthira* considers that time has now comes for departing on their journey to the other worlds, he honours seers, sages and *Brahmins* with gifts. Hen he assembles the citizen of *Hastinapur* and takes in confidence about his desire to renounce *samsara* and takes their approval. Then removing all ornaments from his person he wears clothes made of barks of the tree, which his other brothers and *Draupadi* also follow. Then they traverse the journey with *Yudhishthira* in the forefront, followed by *Bhima*, *Arjuna*, *Nakula*, *Sahdeva* and *Draupadi* in that order. With them strangely a dog also follows them. Seeing them go in this manner, people of *Hastinapur* became exceedingly sad and lament their absence from them.

Arjuna had not yet surrendered the *Gandeev* bow give to him by *Agni* which was borrowed from *Varuna*. Therefore, the purpose of burning *Khanadva* forest was completed long earlier, it was no more needed. *Agni* asks him to surrender the same, even as *Krishna* had surrendered his discus and chariot. *Arjuna* accordingly surrenders the weapons in the river 'अयं वः फाल्गुनो भ्राता गाण्डीवं परमायुधाम्| परित्यज्य वनं यातु नानेनार्थोऽस्ति कश्चन || चक्रग्लं तु यत्कृष्णे स्थितमासीन्महात्मानि | गतं तच्च पुनर्हस्ते कालेनैषति तस्य ह || ततस्ते भ्रातरः सर्वे धनंजयमचेदयन्| स जले प्राक्षिपच्चैतत्तथाक्षय्ये महेषुधी ||'. Then they proceed further on the way circumnutating the earth and finally turning their direction northwards.

On the way, *Draupadi* falls down. Seeing her fall *Bhima* speaks she has been pure and blameless, then why did she fall? *Yudhishthira* explains was due to her reaping the fruits of her partiality towards *Arjuna* in her affection, when she was expected to be devoted to all others as well 'पक्षपातो महानस्या विशेषण धनंजये | तस्यैतत्फलमद्यैषा भक्तं पुरुषसत्तम ||'. When *Sahadeva* falls down, he attributes it to his pride that there were no one other wise man like him 'आत्मनः सदृशं प्राज्ञं नैषोऽमन्यत कंचन | तेन दोषेण पतितस्तमस्मादेश नृपात्मजः ||'. When *Nakula* falls, he attributes it to his pride that there was no one other handsome like him. As one sows so does one reaps 'रूपणि मत्समो नास्ति कश्चिदितयस्य दर्शनम्| अधिकश्चाहमेवैक इत्यस्य मनीसि स्थितम्|| . .यस्य यद्विहितं वीर सोऽवश्यं तदुपाश्नते ||'. When *Arjuna* falls he attributes it to his pride which made him declare that he will defeat all his enemies in single day and he could not do so. In this manner he had insulted great many warriors which one desiring his well being should not never do 'एकाह्ना निर्दहेयं वै शत्रूनित्यर्जुनोऽब्रवीत्| न च तत्कृतवानेष शूरमानी ततोऽपतत्|| अवमेने धनुर्ग्राहानेव सर्वांश्च फाल्गुनः | तथा चैतन्न तु तथा कर्तव्यं भूतिमिच्छता ||'. Finally when *Bhima* too falls he tells him as he falls, that

he had excessive fondness for food and his pride in his strength made him perform actions without understanding the consequences 'अतिभुक्तं च भवता प्राणेन च विकत्थसे | अनवेक्ष्य परं पार्थ तेनासि पतितः क्षितौ ||'.

On the final lap of the journey only *Yudhshithira* and the dog are left. The space and earth begins reverberating with the sound of musical instruments, *Indra* welcomes him to enter the heavens when an interesting and very instructive dialogue ensues between *Yudhishthira* and *Indra*. Sad that his brothers and *Draupadi* could not enter the heavens with him, *having* fallen dead on the way, he declines to enter without them 'भ्रातरः पतिता मेऽत्र गच्छेयुस्ते मया सह | न विना भ्रातृभिः स्वर्गमिच्छे गन्तुं सुरेश्वर || सुकुमारी सुखार्हा च राजपुत्री पुरंदर | सास्माभिः सह गच्छेत तद्भवाननुमन्यताम्||'. *Indra* assures him not to worry since they have all reached the heavens having given up their human forms and will meet them when he too reaches there in his own human body - 'भ्रातृन्द्रक्ष्यसि स्वर्गे त्वमग्रतस्त्रिदिवं गतान्| कृष्णया सहितान्सर्वान्मा शुचो भरतर्षभ || निक्षिप्य मानुषं देहंगतास्ते भरतर्षभ | अनेन त्वं शरीरेण स्वर्गे गन्ता न संशयः ||'.

While this assurance puts his mind in peace, seeing the dog still sticking to his sides, *Yudhishthira* requests *Indra* to allow the dog to enter the heavens, since it has followed him faithfully all the way and it would be improper for him to forsake the dog at this stage 'अयं श्वा भूतभव्येश भक्तो मां नित्यमेव ह | स गच्छेत मया सार्धमानृशंस्या हि मे मतिः ||'. *Indra* declines this request politely saying that he can enter the heavens because he has earned immortality, prosperity and heavenly pleasures like himself, which the dog is not entitled. Therefore leave the dog alone - 'अमर्त्यत्वं मत्समत्वं च राजञ्श्रियं कृत्स्नां महतीं चैव सिद्धिम्| सम्प्राप्तोऽद्य स्वर्गसुखानि च त्वं त्यज श्वानं नात्र नृशंसमस्ति ||'. *Yudhishthira* not happy at this prospect responds as one born in noble family not inclined to act in unrighteous manner. Therefore he says that abandoning one who has followed him diligently would be unworthy of him there being no end to the demerits consequence upon such action. Abandoning one who is devoted would be comparable to great demerit therefore, he is not inclined to abandon him for his own advantage. Therefore for heavenly pleasure he would not abandon the dog - 'अनार्यमार्येण सहस्रनेत्र शक्यं कर्तुं दुष्करमेतदार्य | मा मे श्रिया सङ्गमनं तयास्तु यस्याः कृते भक्तजनं त्यजेयम्|| भक्तत्यागं प्राहुरत्यन्तपापं तुल्यं लोके ब्रह्मवध्याकृतेन | तस्मान्नाहं जातु कथंचनाद्य त्यक्ष्याम्येनं स्वसुखार्थी महेन्द्र ||'.

Indra is surprised to hear this reply, wondering when he has abandoned his brothers and wife why should be still drawn by his attachment to the dog, not even wanting to live in heavens. But *Yudhishthira* is unrepentant saying that he would not abandon one who is weak and has taken refuge in him and instead he would prefer to give his own life. *Yudhishthira* explains that with one who is dead, there could be neither affection nor enmity. It was not possible to make them live again, therefore he abandoned them when they died not when they were alive. Four transgression like frightening one who has taken refuge, killing a woman, robbing a Brahmin and betraying a friend on one hand and abandoning one who is devoted on the other singularly brings demerits 'न विद्यते संधिरथापि विग्रहो मृतैर्मर्त्यैरिति लोकेषु निष्ठा | न ते मया जीवयितुं हि शक्यास्तस्मात्त्यागस्तेषु कृतो न जीवताम्|| भीतिप्रदानं शरणागतस्य स्त्रिया वधो ब्राह्मणस्वापहारः | मित्रद्रोहस्तानि चत्वारि शक्र भक्तत्यागश्च समो मतो मे ||'.

Yama who had taken to the form of a dog listens to this dialogue and impressed manifests in his true form and commends him and his family for his righteousness in thought and deeds, which alone entitled him to enter haven in his human form. Then he reminds that even earlier he had tested him in *Dvaitavana* when he had questioned reputedly about righteousness and having replied satisfactorily got your step brother revived first and not his own brothers Similarly now even at the expense of loosing the heavenly worlds he is choosing to stay with the dog 'अभिजातोऽसि राजेन्द्र पितृवृत्तेन मेधया | अनुक्रोशेन चानेन सर्वभूतेषु भारत ||.. अतस्तवाक्षया लोकाः स्वशरीरेण भारत | प्राप्तोऽसि भरतश्रेष्ठ दिव्यां गतिमनुत्तमम्|| पुरा द्वैतवने चासि मया पुत्र परीक्षितः | पानीयार्थे पराक्रान्ता यत्र ते भ्रातरो हताः || भीमार्जुनौ परित्यज्य यत्र त्वं भ्रातरावुभौ | मात्रोः साम्यमभीप्सन्वै नकुलं जीवमिच्छसि || अतस्तवाक्षया लोकाः स्वशरीरेण भरत | प्राप्तोऽसि भरतश्रेष्ठ दिव्यां गतिमनुत्तमाम्||'. When *Yudhishthira* sees many rulers sitting in heaven and not his brothers there, tells *Indra* that he would prefer to live in the place, be it auspicious or inauspicious, where his brothers are stationed - 'शुभं वा यदि वा पापं भ्रातृणां स्थानमद्य मे | तदेव प्राप्तुमिच्छामि लोकानन्यान्न कामये ||.. तैर्विना नोत्सहे वस्तुमिह दैत्यनिबर्हण | गन्तुमिच्छामि तत्राहं यत्र मे भ्रातरो गताः || यत्र सा बृहती श्यामा बुद्धिसत्त्वगुणान्विता | द्रौपदी योषितां श्रेष्ठा यत्र चैव गता मम ||'.

When he reaches the heavenly worlds, he sees *Duryodhana* reveling in divine company and in heavenly pleasures 'दुयोधनं श्रिया जुष्टं ददर्शासीनमासने || भ्राजमनर्मिवादित्यं वीरलक्ष्म्याभिसंवृतम्| देवैर्भ्राजिष्णुभिः साध्यैः सहितं पुण्यकर्मभिः ||'. Becoming extremely hurt and displeased seeing him, *Yudhishthira* turned his face and spoke with surprise how can such one who has caused so much indignity and humiliation to them and on whose account the world became depopulated could be found in heaven - 'यत्कृते पृथिवी सर्व सुहृदो बन्धवास्तथा | हतास्माभिः प्रसह्याजौ क्लिष्टैः पूर्वं महावने ||'. Saying that he would not like to even see *Duryodhana* he asks the god's messengers to take him where his brothers are- 'अस्मि देव न मे कामा सुयोधनमुदीक्षितुम्| तत्राहं गन्तुमिच्छामि यत्र ते भ्रातरो मम ||'.

This is the moment of great test for *Yudhishthira* when he has to face the realities of life in primordial world and the world as consequence of death. The eternal question presents before himself, which he does not seem to address obscured in mind as he was by the unpleasant sight of *Duryodhana*. Therefore, at this stage *Vyasa* brings out great truth. *Samsara* is the product of relationships built between two souls from the moment they come to be born in gross forms. Before they were born there was neither any relationship nor was there any immediately after the baby is born. The relationship come to be built as the baby grows, when it comes in contact with other souls also born in gross forms, as human or as the fish that swim, the creatures that crawl, animals that roam and the birds that fly. The memory of such relationship becomes aggregated in a comprehensive memory of such relationships, whether pleasant or unpleasant. In the absence of such relationships one is not concerned with others, even though those others are born in similar gross forms. Once the relationship is broken and severed then the two souls becomes freed from the relationships and are free of all the earlier memories of relationships.

Narada conveys to *Yudhishthira* this greet mystery of human life, seeing him under the influence of his earlier relationship established while in *samsara* and under human delusion, even after having come to the heavens. He remarks that it is unbecoming of him to bear any grudge and hatred and speak in this manner, even when he has entered heavens, because here all enmity becomes pacified. *Duryodhana* is respected because he died as true *Kshatriya* and thereafter all enmities have come to end. It is the attributes and inclinations born of nature that make one perform actions in human life. Therefore *Yudhishthira* should not object *Duryodhana* enjoying heavenly pleasures - 'नैवमित्यब्रवीत्तं तु नारदः प्रहसन्निव | स्वर्गे निवासे राजेन्द्र विरुद्धं चापि नश्यति ||..वीरलोकगतिः प्राप्ता युद्धे हुत्वाऽऽत्मनस्तनुम्| यूयं सर्वे सुरसमा येन युद्धे समासिताः || स एष क्षत्रधर्मेण स्थानमेतदवाप्तवान्| भये महति योऽभीतो बभूव पृथिवी पतिः ||..समगच्छ यथान्यायं राज्ञा दुर्योधनेन वै | स्वार्गोऽयं नेह वैराणि भवन्ति मनुजधिप ||'.

Yudhishthira is still not reconciled saying 'यदि दुर्योधनस्यैते वीरलोकाः सनतनाः | अधर्मज्ञस्य पापस्य पृथिवीसुहृदां द्रुहः || यत्कृते पृथिवी नष्टा सहया सनरद्विपः | वयं च मन्युना दग्धा वैरं प्रतिचकीर्षवः || ये ते वीरा महात्मानो भ्रातरो मे महाव्रताः | सत्यप्रतिज्ञा लोकस्य शूरा वै सत्यवादिनः || तेषामिदानीं के लोका द्रष्टुमिच्छामि तानहम्| कर्णं चैव महात्मानं कौन्तेय सत्यसंगरम्||' and informs the messengers again that he does not like to stay in heavens, preferring to live with his brothers wherever they are. Messengers lead him treading a difficult path, dark and dirty, with heaps of bones and blood strewn all-around with awful smell full of worms and reptiles crawling all around. Seeing unpleasant scene *Yudhishthira* walks the uncomfortable and unbearable passage with surprise and sorrow, asking the messengers how far have they still to traverse. Seeing *Yudhishthira* feeling weak and tired with the unpleasant surroundings asks the messengers inform him that Gods have told them to return if he becomes tired on the way. Even as he turns his steps, he hears voices in the rear calling and pleading him not to go leaving them 'अनुग्रहार्थमस्माकं तिष्ठ तावन्मुहूर्तम्|| आयाति त्वयं दुर्धर्ष वाति पुण्यः समीरणः | तव गन्धानुगतस्तात येनास्मान्सुखमागमत्||'. Hearing their pathetic pleadings *Yudhishthira* involuntarily stops, exclaiming how pitiable their suffering is. Not recognizing them he asks them who they are and what they had done to deserve such fate. They speak out : *I aim Karna, I am Bhima, I am Arjuna, I am Nakula, Sahadeva, Drishtadhyumna, Draupadi and her children* - 'अबुध्यमानस्ता वाचो धर्मपुत्रो युधिष्ठिरः | उवाच के भवन्तो वै किमर्थमिह तिष्ठथ || इत्युक्तास्ते ततः सर्वे समन्तादवभाषिरे | कर्णोऽहं भीमसेनोऽहमर्जुनोऽहमिति प्रभो || नकुलः सहदेवोऽहं धृष्टद्युम्नोहमित्युत | द्रौपदी द्रौपदेयाश्च इत्येयं ते विचुकुशुः ||'.

Hearing these words, *Yudhishthira* is shocked and reflects, what is this manner by which *divine*

purpose is fulfilled, by making them suffer in this manner? What demerits could they have done, due to which they have to live in such obnoxious surroundings! He could not recollect any one of them having committed any demerits. How it is that *Duryodhana* is in heavens reveling in pleasure, in spite committing cruel deeds whereas his brothers have to roll in pain and sufferings having performed their duties in righteous manner and performing charitable acts. Wondering whether he is dreaming or awake, whether lost his mind or not, he becomes angry and despondent telling the messengers to go back from they have come since he would not come with them but stay with his brothers and wife suffering the dreadful sorrows 'ता वाचः स तदा श्रुत्वा तद्देशसदृशीनृप | ततो विममृशे राजा किं त्विदं दैवकारितम्|| य इमे पापगन्धेऽस्मिन्देशे सन्ति सुदारुणे | नाहं जानामि सर्वेषां दुष्कृतं पुण्यकर्मणाम्|| किं कृत्वा धृतराष्ट्रस्य पुत्रो राजा दुर्योधनः | तथा श्रिया युतः पापैः सह सर्वैः पदानुगैः || महेन्द्र इव लक्ष्मीवानास्ते परमपूजितः | कस्येदानीं विकारोऽयं य इमे नरकं गताः ||..किं नु सुप्तोऽस्मि जागर्मि चेतयामि न चेतये | अहो चित्तविकारोऽयं स्याद्वा मे चित्तविभ्रमः || .. क्रोधमहारयच्चैव तीव्रं धर्मसुतो नृपः | देवांश्च गर्हयामास धर्मं चैव युधिष्ठिरः || स तीव्रगन्धसंतप्तो देवदूतमुवाच ह | गम्यतां तत्र येषां त्वं दूतस्तेषामुपान्तिकाम्|| न ह्यहं तत्र यास्यामि स्थितोऽस्मीति निवेद्यताम्| मत्संश्रायादिमे दूताः सुखिनो भ्रातरो हि मे ||'.

Seeing *Yudhishthira* react in this manner, *Indra* comes there along with other gods and *Yama Drarmaraj*, even as seers and sages gather. With their enlightened presence entire surrounding becomes luminous and all illusions dissolve and terrible visions vanish. Even as *Yudhishthira* is struck with wonder, *Indra* clarifies that what he saw was but illusory and not real, which every *Kshatriya* has to experience at least once having to perform many cruel deeds when alive on earth. In his case he saw the unpleasant sights of his brothers and *Karna* suffering, because of his having deceived *Drona* about *Ashavatthama's death*. Like him, *Bhishma*, *Arjuna* and all others brothers too were shown the illusory scenes. He should give up his sorrow now that he has been delivered from his demerits. *Karna* about whom he was concerned also lives here in heaven. He has now attained immortal life and will live rest of his life in absolute bliss 'तेन त्वोव गमितो मया श्रेयोऽर्थिना नृप | व्याजेन हि त्वया द्रोण उपचीर्णः सुतं प्रति || व्याजेनैव ततो राजन् दर्शितो नरकस्तव | यथैव त्वं तथा भीमस्तथा पार्थो यमौ तथा || द्रौपदी च तथा कृष्णा व्याजेन नरकं गतः || आगच्छ नरशार्दूल मुक्तास्ते चैव कल्मषात्||'.

Yama then addresses *Yudhishthira* with paternal love and blesses that he may live happily hereafter having suffered sorrows earlier 'कृच्छ्र पूर्वं चानुभूय इतःप्रभृति कौरव | विहरस्व मया सार्धं गतशोको निरामयः | कर्मणां तात पुण्यानां जितानां तपसा स्वयम्| दानानां व महाबहो फलं प्राप्नुहि पार्थिव ||'. Then even as *Indra* tells him to take bath in the pure and auspicious heavenly *Ganga* by which he will be delivered of his humanly form ad all sorrows and sufferings as well all feelings of hatred 'एषा देवनदी पुण्या पार्थ त्रैलोक्यपावनी | आकाशगङ्गा राजेन्द्र तत्राप्लुव गमिष्यसि || अत्र स्नातस्य भावस्ते मानुषो विगमिष्यति | गतशोको निरायासो मुक्तवैरो भविष्यसि ||'. Then *Yama* speaks again that he had tested him thrice and was pleased that he never deviated from the path having becomes qualified by his devotion, truth, compassion and restrain one's senses. Once he had come as *Yaksha* and then as a *dog* and now was his third test when he showed his compassion and pure affection never abandoning his brothers and wife, without slightest trace of sin in mind 'भो भो राजन्महाप्राज्ञ प्रीतोऽस्मि तव पुत्रक | मद्भक्त्या सत्यवाक्यैश्च क्षमया च दमेन च ||'. Thereafter *Yudhishthira* takes bath in the heavenly river *Ganga* and drops his gross human body 'गङ्गां देवनदीं पुण्यां पावनीमृषिसंस्तुताम्| अवगाह्य ततो राजा तनुं तत्याज मानुषीम्|| ततो दिव्यवपुर्भूत्वा धर्मराजो युधिष्ठिरः | निर्वैरो गतसंतापो जले तस्मिन् समाप्लुतः ||'.

Another surprise was in store for *Yudhishthira*, when having discarded the human form - 'तनुं तत्याज मानुषीम्' and availing the luminous one 'दिव्यवपुर्भूत्वा' sees *Krishna* - ददर्श तत्र गोविन्दं, in his supreme resplendent effulgent *form* - ब्राह्मेण वपुषान्वितम्, adorned with luminous *forms* as conch, mace and discus in his hands - दिप्यमानं स्ववपुषा दिव्यैरस्त्रैरुपस्थितम्| चक्रप्रभृतिभिर्घोरैर्दिव्यैः पुरुषविग्रहैः || similar to the *forms* with which he was fạmiliar - तेनैव दृष्टपूर्वेण सादृश्येनैव सूचितम्'. This is an important statement revealing that establishes the fundamental principle that *Brahman* becomes manifest to human beings only when his unfifferentiated *Prime Existence* सत्य becomes differentiated in essence (नाम) and form (रूप) and no other wise. The seer becomes enlightened to *the Prime Existence* as variously declared in *Upanishads* as - 'तत्तददेश्यमग्राह्यमगोत्रमवर्ण मचक्षुःश्रोत्रं तदपाणिपादम्| नित्यं विभुं सर्वगतं सुसूक्ष्मं तदव्ययं यद्भूतयोनिं परिपश्यन्ति धीराः ||...दिव्यो ह्यमूर्तः पुरुषः सबाह्याभ्यन्तरो ह्यजः | अप्राणो ह्यमनाः शुभ्रो ह्यक्षरात्परतः परः ||' (*Mundaka*), therefore can neither be spoken nor thought nor possible to be seen, who can only be accessed only by declaring *it exists*, 'नैव वाचा न मनसा प्राप्तुं शक्यो न चक्षुषा | अस्तीति ब्रुवतोऽन्यत्र कथं तदुपलभ्यते ||'

(*Katha*). *Shankara* therefore suggests that one should approach as one does using the *Vishnu's* idol as medium to reach *Brahman* - 'पुरं च वेश्म मङ्गो यथा तथा तस्मिन्ब्रह्मपुरं शरीरं दहरं वेश्म, ब्रह्मण उपलब्ध्यधिष्ठानमित्यर्थः | यथा विष्णोः शालग्रामः | तस्मिन् हि स्वविजग्शृङ्गे देहे नामरूपव्याकरणाय पविष्टं सदाख्यं ब्रह्म जीवेनात्मनंयुक्तम्|' or as said in another place 'नाम वा ऋग्वेदो यजुर्वेद इत्यादि नामैवतत्| नामोपास्स्व ब्रह्मेति ब्रह्मबुद्धया | यथा प्रतिमां विष्णुबुद्धयोपास्ते तद्वत्||'. That means that even the gods like *Agni, Vayu, Prithvi, Akasha or Indra, Ashvins or Yama* are to be viewed as दिव्यैः पुरुषविग्रहैः, as *divine essence* or *energy* posited in *human form* for human mind to have access to them and not that they have any *human forms*.

Therefore, since death destroys the human forms *Yudhishthira* was obliged to see *Krishna* enveloped in the effulgent form ब्राह्मेण वपुषान्वितम्, suggested in the same form as he was familiar to him earlier 'तेनैव दृष्टपूर्वेण सादृषेनैव सूचितम् || दीप्यमानं स्ववपुषा दिव्यैरस्त्रैरुपस्थिनम्| चकपभृनिभिर्घोरैर्दिव्यैः पुरुषविग्रहैः ||' specially refrring him as *Govinda*, being one who grants enlightenment 'गां विन्दति इति गोविन्दः'. He sees *Arjuna* offering his obeisance. Thereafter he sees *Karna* surrounded by twelve suns -'कर्णं शस्त्रभृतां वरः द्वादशादित्यसंहितं', *Bhima* sitting by the side of *Vayu* and surrounded *Maruts*- 'मरुद्गणवृतं विभूम् . . वायोर्मूर्तिमतः पार्श्वे', *Nakula* and *Saahdeva* in *Ashvins* 'अश्विनोस्तु स्थाने', *Draupadi* adorned with lotus flowers and luminous like Sun 'कमलोत्पलमालिनीम्... तिष्ठन्तीमर्कवर्चमाम्| श्रींग्षा द्रौपदीरूपा त्वदर्थे मानुषं गता | अयोनिजा लोककान्ता पुण्यगन्धा युधिष्ठिर || रत्यर्था भवनां ह्येषा निर्मिताा शूलपाणिना | द्रुपदस्य कुले जाता भवद्भिश्चोपजीविता ||'.

Then he points out a *Gandharva* who had assumed the *form* as *Dhritarshtra* and also *Satyaki* and others who had descended in *Vrishni* and *Andhaka* families and also *Abhimanyu* sitting by the side of Moon and shining like moon. Then again he points out *Pandu, Kunti* and *Madri, Bhishma* in the company of *Vasus, Drona* sitting by the side of *Brihaspati*. He informs that all other divine beings who had taken birth as warriors to fight on their side have gone back to their respective regions. As against these, who represent luminous forces, the others who represent the obscure forces as in the case of *Kamsa, Jarasandha, Shishupala, Duryodhana* and others also go back to heaven having fulfilled their assignments once their *karmas* performed according to the attributes and inclinations born of their nature are fulfilled according to the *divine intent* and *purpose*.

Thus ends the recital of Mahabharata, the luminous scripture where the human goals for* धर्म , अर्थ, काम *and* मोक्ष *are narrated with the historical back ground of the deeds of Kauarava and Pandavas and the role played by resplendent Krishna.

Chapter XVIII

When *Vyasa* took upon himself to record the events that lead to *Kurukshetra* War, his purpose was not only to tell a temporal tale but to draw conclusive morals from the events that assure and establish triumph of the luminous powers over those dark forces, the *eternal essence - Krishna* playing a comprehensive role pervading as *Vishnu* - 'यश्चायं अध्यात्मं शरीरस्तेजोमयोऽमृतमय पुरुषः अयं एव स योऽयं आत्मा इदं अमृतं इदं ब्रह्म इदं सर्वम्|'. Therefore, *Mahaabharata* does neither end with *Pandavas* reaching heavens nor *Krishna* departing to his eternal dwelling place. The events which lead to the *Mahabharata* war had ling term temporal relevance and *Krishna-saga* having undoubted spiritual relevance. Therefore both these aspects need to be examined individually and separately.

The temporal history as recorded is not true representation of the events as they transpired but as the events have created impressions on persons who record them. Therefore, truth eludes temporal history from being studied since they elude sensitive receptivity, in-depth insight and incisive investigation. This becomes clear from the very first word spoken by *Schopenhauer* in his book *The World as Will and Idea* : '*It remains completely unknown to us, what objects may be by themselves and apart from the receptivity of our senses. We know nothing but our manner of perceiving them; the manner being peculiar to us, and not necessarily shared by every being, though, no doubt, by every human being*'. *Will Durant* explains that moon is merely a bundle of sensations, unified through elaboration of sensations in to forming ideas.

Therefore, though science and technology see creation in temporal context as progressive advancement and survival of the fittest of the physical *forms*, religion sees creation in spiritual context as an opportunity provided for regeneration of the *essence* which is potential in the *form*. Therefore while scientists concentrate their inquiry and investigation in the progress and evolution of the physical *forms*, the spiritual metaphysics observe steady decline in righteousness of the *essence*. धर्म, righteousness which is conceived as standing in four measures at the pinnacle in *Satya yuga* with comprehensive wisdom and discrimination for a period of 17,28,000 human years, is observed to have declined standing in three measures in *Treta yuga* with sacrifice and action for a period of 12,96,000 human years, further declined standing in two measures for a period of 8,64,000 human years in *Dvapara yuga* with energy and power and finally standing in one measure in *Kali yuga* with illusion and obscurity of righteousness.

In fact, even as *Dvapara yuga* was coming to close, the long shadows of *Kali Yuga* were already observed falling on the social, moral and ethical performance of people. The society classified according to attributes (गुण) and inclination (स्वभाव) was seen disturbed and vitiated, with mixture of attributes as related to their enterprises, the dull-witted people of lower capabilities overpowering the few with higher capabilities, undertaking tasks with cruel and desperate consequences. *Yudhishthira* bemoans that in his opinion because of the increasing assimilation of people of different classification it has becomes difficult to know one's class. Men of different classification. beget offspring from all sorts of women and speech, intercourse, birth and death seem to be common for all persons. Therefore men of wisdom gives primacy to the good conduct of a person 'जातिरत्र महासर्प मनुष्यत्वे महामते | सकरात् सर्ववर्णानां दुष्परीक्ष्येति मे मतिः || सर्वे सर्वास्वपत्यानि जनयन्ति सदा नराः | वाङ्मैथुनमथो जन्ममरणं च सम नृणाम्||...| तस्माच्छील प्रधानेष्ट विदुर्ये तत्वदार्शिनः ||'. Yudhishthira use the word *Varna* in the same manner as *Krishna* uses in *Bhagavad Gita* as classification of people according to their गुण and कर्म . *Krishna* therefore, tells *Arjuna* that it is inexorable *Time* which obscures human mind, leading to the decline in standards of righteousness - 'एवं परंपरापाप्तमिदं राजर्षयो विदुः | स कालेनेह महता

योगो नष्टः परंतप ||'.

It was largely believed that *Kali Yuga* will not enter as long as *Krishna* is alive in this world. Therefore when *Krishna* sees *Vrishni-Andhakas* behaving in unrighteous manner and various omens appearing all around with frightening forms, stormy winds blowing, Vultures swooping down from the sky and all symbols of prosperity appear to be robbed by *rakshasas* he attributes the fact to inexorable *Time* having seen similar signs appearing when *Bharata* war was about to commence and remembering that thirty six years have passed since *Gandhari* had uttered her ominous curse on his people, he does not interfere and allows the events to take place as ordained 'कृतगन्तमन्यथा नैच्छत्कर्तुं सजगतः प्रभुः |'.

According to *Bhagavat Purana, Kali yuga* entered the moment *Krishna* departed from this world to his mythical supreme abiding place in *Vaikuntha* 'यदा मुकुन्दे भगवान्क्षमां त्यक्त्वा स्वपदं गतः | तद्दिनात्कलिरायातः सर्व साधनबाधकः ||'. Even as *Krishna* pointed out to *Balarama* the portends of the ensuing *Kali Yuga* and did not intervene in the operation of Time when observes his own people are killing each other in a drunken brawl eve so *Yudhishthira* observes people taking to sinful ways of living, possessed of anger, greed and falsehood, dealings becoming crooked, friends quarrel with each other, parents and sons like wise brother and others relatives quarrelling with each other and realizes that *Kali yuga* is fast approaching 'कालस्य च गतिं रौद्रां विपर्यस्तर्तुधर्मिणः | पापीयसीं नृणां वार्तां क्रोधलोभानृतात्मनाम्|| जिव्हाप्रायं व्यवहृतं शाठ्यमिश्रं च सौहृदम्| पितृमातृसुहृद्भ्रातृदम्पतीनां च कल्कनम्||', he decides to place the young *Pariskhita* on the throne and casting off his mortal body to depart on his final journey.

Pandavas in spite of possessing righteous character and inclinations did not leave the subsequent generations all too enriched in righteousness and nobility, except for *Parikshita* and his son *Janameajaya* who left some marks on the sands of history. For all other *Kshatriya* families the *Kali yuga* came as great moment of disintegration, even Brahmins finding their role being eroded by people behaving with terrible and righteous conduct, the path leading to decay, deterioration and disappearance of penance and austerities 'युगोऽयं दारुणः कलिः | तेन लुप्तः सदाचारो योगमायातपांसि च ||'.

The great *Kurukshetra* war being greater and effective leveler, had left the society, like all wars do with morality and ethical standards in a disarray, not merit but might determining righteousness and fairness. In the years that followed *Mahabharta* war the political control passed from *Arya Brahmin-Kshatriya* class to the community increasingly dominated by non-*Arya* trading class and industrious class known as पणि and दास. The highly sensitive intellectual and spiritual philosophy and life came under increasing influence of the urban civilization and earthly philosophy of the non-*Aryas*. *Janamejaya* was perhaps the last great *puranic* rulers the process of integration of *vedic* society becoming increasingly influenced and integrated with the earlier social, cultural and religious groups to create, neither *vedic* nor non-*vedic* but a comprehensive society which came to be designated as Hindu.

As a consequence there was disarray in social structure, people not knowing what is righteous and what is unrighteous. People neither followed disciplined actions nor respected *Wisdom,* having neither discipline nor deference. Enamored by dry and unproductive debates and discussion they became encouraged to perform meanest of the mean tasks. No one had faith or respect in others, there being increase in unrighteousness. The righteous, valorous, and enterprise were weakened and destroyed. Only obscurity remaining alive and kicking, the world was reduced to deplorable conditions. Personal likes and dislikes becoming the deciding factor for choosing a partner and trickery alone the moving force for business enterprise. धर्म and अध्यात्मविद्या which were at their peak in *Satya yuga* sank to the depths in *Kali yuga,* अधर्म and भौतिक विद्या becoming increasingly uncontrollable leading the worlds to decay, deterioration and destruction, exoteric amoral, self-centred and temporal values taking ascendance over moral, ethical and spiritual values. Importance was given not to the divine *essence* energy; power and force behind the manifest creation and its evolution but to empowering the human mind and perfecting human enterprise Life became weak, dispirited and short-lived, deprived of wisdom in spite of the increase in information and knowledge in science and technology. Absence of

wisdom made people greedy, pushing them to sensual desires. Becoming arrogant and greedy they fell in delusion, not hesitating to receive in charity even from even evil persons. Even the foolish ones considered themselves wise. Warriors became like thorns not protecting the weak and noble. Without *Wisdom* people followed their instincts, human beings performed unrighteous actions, obscure people wrangling with men of wisdom.

Without spiritual *Wisdom* people followed their instincts, human beings performed temporal actions with unrighteous consequence, obscure people wrangling with men of wisdom. Becoming arrogant and greedy they fell in delusion, not hesitating to receive in charity even from even evil persons. Even the foolish ones considered themselves wise. Warriors became like thorns not protecting the weak and noble. Without *Wisdom* people followed their instincts, human beings performed unrighteous actions, obscure people wrangling with men of wisdom.

In *Vedic* and post *vedic* times there was a great harmony between *Brahmins* as the enlightened ones, wise as composers of spiritual and mystical hymns and *Kshatriya* as the energetic ones, powerful for preservation of the hymns and of the social fabric. The early strains seems to appear in *upanishadic* times when one finds *Pravahana Javali*, the ruler of *Panchala* respectfully and subtly suggests to *Svetaketu* not to be offended for having pointing out that the mystical wisdom was never with any *Brahmin* whatsoever 'इयं विद्यंतः पूर्वं न कस्मिंश्चन व्राम्हणा उवास; तां त्वहं तुभ्यं वक्ष्यामि |' and *Ajatashatru* mentions to *Gargya* that it would be contrary to tradition that a *Brahmin* should approach a *Kshatriya* for initiation 'प्रतिलोमंचैतद्यद्ब्रासंणः क्षत्रियमुपेयात्, ब्रम्ह वक्षयतीति |'.

In the post *vedic* era, with the increasing influence of non-*vedic* civilization with their own culture and civilization, religious practices and temporal life, there was a shift from *Brahmin-Kshatriyas* axis to *Vaishyas* and *Shudras* who had since then redefined their own role in the society from servile one to the socially independent of the *Brammanaical* and *Kshatraiya* influence with their prosperity after the discoveries of iron as important tool in economical life of people. Those who were denied the wisdom contained in *vedic* and scriptures became emboldened seeing *Krishna* being skeptical of the sacrificial rites and rituals espoused in *vedic* scriptures being interpreted and used by *brahmannical priest class* as the means to attain worldly pleasures in the world of heavens. They were impressed by his re-interpretation of sacrifice as performance of ordained actions for the well being of the world order in terms of the ऋत and धर्म, without attachment to the fruits of their performance and communion भक्ति as redeeming factor for all no one being dear nor any abhorrent 'समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु न मे द्वेष्योऽस्ति न प्रियः | ये भजन्ति तु मां भक्त्या मयि ते तेषु चाप्यहम्||', for women, *vaishyas* and *shudras* 'स्त्रियो वैश्यस्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति परां गतीम्||', a leaf, a flower, a fruit and water being sufficient for devotion 'पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति |'. During those days when religions had not become sectarian, expansive universal *vedic* spiritual thoughts to exposition of the perennial thoughts in *Mahabharata* and *Krishna-ism* espoused in earlier *Puranas* was generally accepted by masses and even those who were outside the pale of *vedic* society was in keeping with the spirit of spiritual evolution in India. Therefore, if one finds people finding affinity in *Budhha's teaching* and the reverting back to *veidc* religion under the missionary zeal of many *brahmannical* intellectuals.

In the post-*Mahabharata* India, some well known tribes like *Yadavas* settled in *Saurashtra* and other branch on the banks of *Yamuna*. *Kosala* which once gained eminence under *Dasharathi Rama*, finds brief mention of their descendent taking part in *Mahabharata* War till one finds brief mention of *Prasenjit* in *Buddhist* scriptures. With the death o *Jarasandha*, *Magadha* lost its glory for a long time till it rose to prominence in fourth century under *Bimbisar* who was followed by *Ajatashatru*, *Ajatashatru* by his son *Darshaka* and his son *Uday*. soon this *Arya Kshatriya* rule ends when the kingdom passes over to *Mahapadma Nanda* and his eight sons. For students of India's traditional history, *Mahapadma Nanda* becomes the milestone for determining the time when *Kali Yuga* but as far as *Kshatriyas* defined as the enlightened and noble warriors, the divine intent and purpose and the assurance given to *Mother*

Earth seems to have been fulfilled when *Duryodhana* becomes the instrument for reducing the burden on the earth by destruction of the excess of evil persons 'दुर्योधन इति ख्यतः स ते कार्यं करिष्यति || तं च पाप्य महीपालं कृतकृत्या भविष्यसि | तस्यार्थे पृथिवीपालाः कुरुक्षेत्रं समागताः || अन्योन्यं घतयिष्यन्ति दृढैः शस्त्रैः पहारिणः | ततस्ते भविता देवि भारस्य युधि नाशनम्||'. The temporal events and secular history with power and influence now shift from mythical legends and metaphorical references to *Brahmins* as advisors and *Kshatriyas* as the rulers in *vedic* and *Upanishads* and *Brahmana* scriptures to *Vaishyas* as the advisors and financiers and *Shudras* as the rulers in the years after Alexander's invasion of north western frontiers in 326 B.C. and the rise of the formidable empire of *Chandragupta Maurya*.

As against the dwindling importance of *Brahmins* and *Kshatriyas* in temporal worlds during *Chandragupta Maurya's* and thereafter, the popular myths and legends around *Krishna* and *vaishnavism* became a vehicle and forum for ascendance of *vedic* wisdom to be propounded as a dynamic force of spiritual consciousness through *Mahabharata*, which became encyclopedic store house of three-fold mystical secrets relating to temporal, metaphysical and spiritual as well as those relating to धर्म, अर्थ and काम concealed in *Veda* and other scriptures came to be included 'भूतस्थानानि सर्वाणि रहस्यं त्रिविधं च यत्| वेदा योगः सविज्ञानो धर्म अर्थ काम एव च || धर्मकामार्थयुक्तानि च सर्वं विविधानि च | लोकयात्राविधानं च सर्वं तद्दृष्टवानृषः ||', a perennial source for all later poets to draw sustenance as creature draw sustenance from clouds 'सर्वेषां कविमुख्यानामुपजैव्यो भविष्यति | पर्जन्यः इव भूतानामक्षयो भारतद्रुमः ||' as *Harivamsha* and early *puranas* acknowledged.

The *vedic* scriptures being mystical in essence were difficult to be understood. Therefore they were supplemented by *Brahmanas* discussing the significance of the sacrificial rites and rituals, *Upanishads* reflecting and meditating on the hymns, and subsidiary sciences relating to शिक्षा (*phonetics*) कल्प (*rituals*) व्याकरण (*grammar*) निरूक्त (*etymology*) छन्द (*metrics*) and ज्योतिष (*astrology*). While these met the need of the sensitive intellectuals for popular dissemination इतिहास (history), पुराण (ancient lore), विद्या (sciences), श्लोकः (verses), सूत्राः (aphorisms), अनुव्याख्यानानि (explanation and commentaries) were made available.

It is not that all came to identical conclusions, some arriving at conclusions which either denied the conclusiveness of the *vedic* thoughts or did not find the necessity to accept some of the fundamental concepts accepted a supreme god as the origin sustainer or destroyer of creation in *brahmannical* tradition. In the early stage while *Buddhism* and *Jainism* not being seen as different religions but only as different दर्शन (perception) became increasingly attractive, initially for large number of *Shudras* and *Vaishyas* and *Brahmins* and *Kshatriyas* joining late, influenced by *Krishna's* opposition to ritualistic religion as interpreted and used by *brahmannical priest class* as the means to attain worldly pleasures in the world of heavens. Influenced by *Krishna's* interpretation of sacrifice as performance of ordained actions for the well being of the world order in terms of the ऋत and धर्म, without attachment to the fruits of their performance and communion many were attracted by *Budhha's* teachings where there was emphasis on दुःख - *suffering* here and now and finding ways and means of ameliorating it here and now itself rather than suffering pain here for possible pleasure and happiness later in heaven after one's death.

It was not *Buddha's* teachings that troubled the *Brahmins* as much as with emergence of Gautama Buddha the perceived threat to their position as custodians of the *vedic* wisdom and spokesman to speak for and on behalf of gods. The financial loss from elaborate and extended sacrifices was seen with the prosperity and economic wellbeing of the *Vaishys* and *Shudras*. Attempts to propose principles of *Aapaddharama* for *Brahmins* was found to have inconsequential effect on the position of *Brahmins* in the society. And when *Buddha's* teachings acquired religious and sectarian overtones as something opposed to *vedic* philosophy and religion, that Brahmins woke up to oppose *Buddha's* teachings tooth and nail. The battle was taken up on two fronts. On the intellectual level attempts were directed by the *Brahmannical* class to preserve and conserve the *vedic* and *upanishadic* scriptures along with rites and rituals and to systematized the metaphysical philosophy systems and ideological

doctrines through six primary and principal perceptions or दर्शनाs couched in aphorisms or सूत्रs *Nyayasutras* of *Aklshapada Gautama*, *Mimamsasutras* of *Jaiminim*, *Vedantasutras* of *Badarayana*, *Yogasutras* of *Patanjali* and *Sankhyasutras* of *Kapila* and *Vaisheshikhasutras* of *Kanada* being the earliest दर्शनs. For each of these sutras there were equally enlightened commentators like *Vatsayana* for *Nyayasutras*, *Sabara* for *Mimamsasutras*, *Prashnapada* for *Vaisheshikha*, *Shankara* for *Vedantasutras* and *Vyasa* for *Yogasutras*. In some cases it was noticed that reinterpretation of the *vedic* principles made some people suspect as was in the case of *Shankara* to refer him as *concealed Buddha* - प्रच्छन्न बौध.

On the popular level we find reference of *Krishna* as *Devakiputra* and disciple of *Ghora Aangiras*, a *vedic* seer in *Chhandogya Up*. His adoration was recorded by *Vyasa* in *Mahabharat* and further elaborated with additions if many myths and legends by different contributors. It was followed by *Harivamsha* and other early *puranas*. By early 7[th] century B.C. the adoration even spreading over most parts of India remaining in common man's memory and lexicon on large scale and over many centuries, which made *Panini* to use *Krishna* and *Arjuna* in *Nirukta* (7th century B.C.) as revered as divine persons - ". *Magasthenes*, who was a Greek ambassador in *Chandragupta Maurya's* court (340-293 B.C), makes reference to *Krishna* as *Herecles* belonging to *Saursenis*, whose worship was extensively practiced *Mathura* and *Krishnapura*. *Kautilya* (360-283 B.C.) makes reference to *Krishna* worship in *Arthashastra*. *Patanjali* (3[rd] century B.C.) makes reference in *Mahabhashya* to *Krishna's* killing *Kamsa* 'प्रहागघ्यन्ते कंसस्य च कृष्णस्य च आसाधुर मातुले कृष्णः' and 'जघान कंसं किल वासुदेवः'. *Helidorous*, the ambassador of Greek king *Antilkadas* of *Taxila* was a *vaishnava*. He was an ambassador in King *Bhagabhadra's* court and erected a column in the year 113 B.C. which makes reference to *Vishnu* as the God of gods and of his three-steps by which he traversed the space.

Opposition of the brahmannical class to *Buddha's* teachings did not continue when it was see that many of the principles propounded by him were already established in *vedic*, *upanishadic* scriptures and *Bhagavad Gita*. Though *Shankara* took the challenge of the intellectual opponents of intellectual foundations, for spiritual enlightenment everyone stands on equal foundation, the common person having the same opportunity as seer *Vamadeva* had. Therefore, along with the metaphysical principles expounded in many of his intellectual commentaries he also composed many lyrical hymnal adorations as important means for lay and ordinary people.

While *Harivamsha* and many *puranas* composed by different *Vyasas*, collators or redactors had tried to fill the lacunae *Bhagavat Purana* as the best and quintessence of all the *puranas* came to be composed during this period even making *Gautama Budhha* one of the subsequent descents of *Vishnu* along with *Krishna*, where we have a quaint reference that *Narada* found *Veda Vyasa* having no peace in mind even after he was praised by the celestial seer for composing *Mahabharata* full of wonderful ideals of human pursuit - 'महद्भुतमकृतवाननभागनं मर्वार्थपरिवृंहितम्'. Then *Narada* having told him that the innumerable gory details of horrendous actions performed by different character in *Mahabharata* created impression on misguided people that these precepts were pious who refused to follow the teachings which prohibit such actions 'जुगुप्सित धामकृते नुशासन स्वभावरक्तस्य महान्व्यतिक्रमः | यद्वाक्यतो धर्मः इतीतरः स्थितो न मन्यते तास्यनिवारणं जनः ||' *Veda Vyasa* was obliged to compose the greatest of the *puranas*, *Bhagavat Purana* which narrated the *Krishna's* exploits describing the blissful, selfless and overwhelming love for *Krishna* as the beloved Father, Mother, Child, Friend or whichever relationship ones feels in need for spiritual fulfillment for the welfare of the people reeling under obscurity created by attributes and inclinations born of nature 'प्रवर्तमानस्य गुणैरनात्मनस्ततो भवान्दर्शय चेष्टितं विभोः |'.

Bhagavat Purana declares that भक्ति devotion was born in south in the region of *Dravids*, became nurtured in *Karnataka* region, then wandering around in *Maharashtra* then became mutilated, weak and soulless in *Gujarat* before finally it became rejuvenated again in *Vrindavana* 'उत्पन्ना द्रविडे साहं वृद्धिं कर्णाटकं गता | क्वचित्क्वचिन्महाराष्ट्रे गुर्जरे जीर्णतां गता || तत्र घोरकलेर्योगात्पाखण्डैः खण्डिताङ्गका | दुर्बलाहं याता पुत्राभ्यां सह मन्दताम्|| वृन्दावनं पुनः प्राप्य

नवीनेव सुरूपिणी | जाताहं युवती सम्यवश्रेष्ठरूपा तु साम्प्रताम्||'. The emergence of *Krishna* as the object of adoration, devotion and love as direct consequence of *Bhagavata Purana* championing the nine primary responses through hearing about the Lord, glorifying the Lord, remembering the Lord, serving lotus feet of the Lord, worshiping the Lord, offering prayers to the Lord, serving the Lord, building a friendship with the Lord and finally surrendering everything one's thoughts, actions and deeds one's thoughts, actions and deeds pushed in the back ground *Krishna*, who was *Ghora Angiras's* disciple initiated in the three foundational principles that the *self* within is indestructible, unshakable and the very essence of life - 'एनतत्रयं प्रतिपधंत्अक्षितमसि अच्युतमसि पाणसंशितमसीनि |' and 'त्वमक्षरं पग्मं वेदिनव्यं त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम्| त्वमव्ययः शाश्वतधर्मगोप्ना सनननस्त्वं पुरुषो...||' and as a consequence reinterpreted sacrifice - यज्ञ to mean performance of actions for maintaining the world order with out expecting any fruits in return and his place was taken by *Krishna*, the child to be fondled, the boy to be made friends with, the youth to be loved and the mature person to be accepted as father, mother, friend and a counsel, a redeemer and deliverer 'पितामहस्य जगतो माता धाता पितामहः |... गतिर्भर्ता प्रभुः साक्षी निवासः शरणं सुहृत्| प्रभवः प्रलयः स्थानं निधानं बीजमव्ययम्||'.

The emergence of *Krishna* as the object of adoration, devotion and love as direct consequence of *Bhagavata Purana* championing *Bhakti* from the root *bhaja* meaning to serve, honour, revere, love and adore to be in - communion with *Krishna. Bhakti* as clear expression of devotion to *Krishna* as part of comprehensive *Vishnuism,* which began to be formed in *puranas* emphasizing devotion to *Krishna,* as sole means of salvation was given impetus *Alvars* as the earliest mystics following the *Buddhist era* who nurtured the incipient *bhakti* movement in South India under the *Pallavas* and *Pandyas* in the fifth to seventh centuries AD. Though it began initially as unorthodox rebellion against caste distinctions imposed by brahmannical rituals, in the course of time it became an effective instrument of dissemination for the intellectuals also later incorporating in their philosophical systems by *Shankara* (c 788 - 820 AD.) *Ramanuja* (1017-1137 A.D.,) and *Madhva* (1238-1319) giving new perceptive and interpretation to the ancient *vedic* religion. They wrote commentaries on *Brahma Sutras*, *Bhagavad Gita* and *Upanishads* - पस्थानत्रयि explaining their seemingly different thought streams coalesced with *Bhakti* as the cementing factor.

Bhakti movement began to spread to *Karnataka* with *Madhva* having expounded the foundational principles which were succinctly expressed by *Madhva's fundamental propositions* have been succinctly summarized by *Vidhyabhushan Baladeva*, a follower of *Chaitanya* 'श्रीमन्मध्वमते हरिः परतरः सत्यं जगत्त्रूपो भेदो जीवगणः हरेनुचरगः नीचोच्चभावः गतः | मुक्तिर्नैजसुखानुभूतिनिर्मल भक्तिश्च तत्साधनमह्यक्षादित्रयं प्रमाण मखिलाम्नैकवेद्योहरिः ||' - In the opinion of *Madhva*, *Hari* is Supreme above all. In principle, the *World* is *Real*. There exists difference between souls. As followers of *Hari* they have inherent existence as superior & inferior. Deliverance is the ultimate experience of Bliss. Unalloyed devotion is the sole instrument. The three scriptures (*Upanishads*, *Brahmasutra* and *Bhagavad Gita*) are the fundamental foundations, establishing that *Hari* alone is the sole promoter. During the 12th and 13th centuries A.D., the philosophy of *Madhva* propagated to-fold *Haridasas* movement *Vyasakuta & Dasakuta,* the former requiring proficiency in the *Veda* & other scriptures and the latter conveyed *Bhakti through* popular *Bhajans* to the common masses.

Bhakti in *Maharshatra* has long contact with great saints like *Jnaneshvar, Namdeo, Eknatha, Tukaram* and others and in *Gujarat* with *Narsi Mehta* and then moving to the North during the late medieval ages when North India was under Muslim domination. The movement was spontaneous and the various mystics had their own version of devotional expression more or less centred on *Rama* and *Krishna*, both of whom were incarnations of *Vishnu* and loosely associated group of saints like *Chaitanya, Vallabha, Meera, Kabir, Surdas, Tulsi Das* and *Goswamis* and other mystics spearheading the movement. *Chaitanya, Shankardeva* expanded the movement in *Bengal, Orissa* and *Assam.* Their teachings were that people could cast aside the heavy burdens of ritual and caste and the subtle complexities of philosophy and simply express their overwhelming love for God. This period was also

characterized by a spate of devotional literature in vernacular prose and poetry in the ethnic languages of the various Indian states or provinces. A remarkable movement known as *International Society for Krishna Consciousness* or *ISKCON* came on the global arena in 1966 with *Bhagavad-Gita* and *Bhagavat Purana* as the central text under *A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*, in a line of spiritual masters dating from 15th century Indian mystic *Chaitanya.*

This dynamic movement opened doors for dissemination of *Krishna-ism* by other teachers as well making *Krishna* truly recognized as a *World Teacher*. *Krishna's* multi-dimensional personality described by *puranas* and poets, through lyrical poetry and performing arts, like dramas, dance and mass revelry, vibrant and colourful as the rainbow that flashes across the sky. On the narrow path that leads one to *Krishna* are strewn flowers as colorful as they were fragrant, stimulating the senses and captivating the mind - 'तस्मिञ्छुक्लमुत नील्माहुः पिङ्गलं हरितं लोहितं च | एष पन्था ब्रह्मणा हानुवित्तस्तेनैति ब्रह्मवित्पुण्यकृत्तैजसश्च ||', and in the honey that was gathered all juice from many flowers were secreted, difficult to be discerned and differentiated 'यथा सोम्य मधु मधुकृतो निर्तिष्ठन्ति नानात्ययानां वृक्षाणां रसान्समवहारमेकतां रसं गमयन्ति || ते यथा तत्र न विवेकं लभन्तेऽमुष्याहं वृक्षस्य रसोऽस्म्यमुष्याहं वृक्षस्य रसोऽस्मीत्येवमेव खलु सोम्येमाः सर्वाः प्रजाः सति सम्पद्य न विदुः सति सम्पद्यामह इति ||'. There like the salt that is thrown in aware becomes dissolved, there being no salt to be seized, verily is *Krishna*, the great being, infinite, limitless, consists of nothing but awareness, arising from where one merges verily therein itself 'स यथा सैन्धवखिल्य उदके प्रास्त उदकमेवानुविलीयेत न हास्योद्ग्रहणायेव स्यात्| यतो यतस्त्वाददीत लवणमेवैवं वा अर इदं महद्भूतमनन्तपारं विज्ञानघन एव | एतेभ्यो भूतेभ्यः समुत्थाय तान्येवानु विनश्यति ...||', where, verily, everything has become the *Self*, then by what and by whom should one smell .. see .. hear .. speak .. think .. understand another? By what one should know that by which all this known? - 'यत्र हि द्वैतमिव भवति तदितर इतरं जिघ्रति . . पश्यति . . श्रृणोति . . अभिवदति . . मनुते . . विजानाति यत्र वा अस्य सर्व मात्मैवाभूत्तत्केन कं पश्येत ...' where all becoming one he becomes transaren't as water, one, the seer without duality 'सलि एको द्रष्टाऽद्वैतो भवत्येषब्रह्मलोकः . . एषास्य परमा गतिरेषाऽस्य परमा सम्पदेषोऽस्य परमो लोक एषोऽस्य परम आनन्द ...||'.

When the dew drops evaporate and become one with the river, when the rivers disappear and become one with the ocean, there one's desires cease his desire itself becoming *Krishna*. Such one should not waste one's time delving on his *form* and temporal actions but be receptive, reflective and meditative of the *essence* suggested behind those actions, accessing the exclusive wisdom, which is not normally accessible to all.

For those to whom *Krishna* becomes thus accessible, him they will as one in which everything immerges, in which every thing abides and in which every thing merges 'यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते | येन जातानि जीवन्ति यत्प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्ति | तद्विजिज्ञासस्व ||', as in which everything occasions as the past, present and the future 'भूतंभवद्भविष्यमिति सर्वमोङ्कार एव ||', as the smallest of the small & the greatest of the great 'अणोरणीयान्महतो महीयानाम्', as life of the life, the eye if the eye, the ear of the ear, mind of the mind- 'प्राणस्य प्राणमुत चक्षुषश्चक्षुरुत श्रोत्रस्य श्रोत्रं मनसो ये मनो विदुः |', as the *Self*, which abides in the heart of all beings, as the beginning, middle and the end 'अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभूताशयस्थितः | अहमादिश्च मध्यं च भूतानामन्त एव च ||'. Only he who sees *Krishna* thus manifest, will see him in the grain of sand and in the drop of the water, in the whiff of the breeze and spark in every blaze, 'यो ह वै ज्येष्ठं च श्रेष्ठं च वेद ज्येष्ठश्च श्रेष्ठश्च स्वानां भवति .... |' - as the oldest and the greatest becomes oldest and the greatest of his people.

Speaking of those who are fully enlightened, *Radhakrishnan* quotes in *The Principal Upanishads* an extract from *Wottons'* paraphrase of *Horace* found in *Palgraves's Golden Treasury*, which says '*This man is freed from servile bonds of hope to rise or fear to full; Lord of himself thought not of lands and having nothing, yet hath all*'. As *Blake* says in *Auguries on Innocence* such one become successful :

'To see a world in a grain of sands,
And heaven in a wild flower ;
Hold infinity in the palm of his (your) hand,
And eternity in an hour'.

IV An Analysis

Krishna As the form

Mahabharata though spoken as इनिहास can hardly meet the definition by *E.H.Carr as ' . . a progressive science, in the sense that it seeks to provide constantly expanding and deepening insights into a course of events which is itself progressive*' or a comprehensive narration of incidents and events relating to the struggle between *Pandavas* and *Kauaravas,* with *Krishna* playing dominant role prior, during and later. Nevertheless, it has immense influence on the people of India as a religious scripture पंचम वेद as well as a documents which gives glimpse and pointes to many historical events. History is rarely factual and true representation of the past events of people, place and periods, the gross empirical narration of the one who records the events narrated, influenced by personal preference.

Obsession with historical accuracy is a western concept rather than eastern. Therefore, *A.L Bhasham* the author of the book '*The Wonder that was India*' remarked, '*If you read the Ramayana and Mahabharata as history, you will find lots of mythology. If you read them as mythology, you will find lots of history'*. Greatness of scriptures lies in the fact that ancient seers saw that mythology provides more understanding and authentic span of vision of the evolutional of human civilization than temporal history would ever do. In *Vyasa's* resourceful hands the narration came to reflect his overwhelming adoration and deification of *Krishna,*. with spiritual and metaphysical overtone in the hands of later redactors or *vyasas* becoming a religious scripture. Unlike *vedic* and *upanishdic* scriptures, *Mahabharata* it is spontaneous, lateral and easier to accept as factual, temporal experienced through sensory influences than the potential, profound, spiritual experienced through supra-sensory perception.

History which claims to be factual representation cannot be absolute, differing from one statement to the other, from historians to historians, history in their hands being the victors' view having been written by the victorious than by the losers. Their search is in stages, through intellectual reasoning and rationalization improving and clarifying from one stage to the other. Scriptures on the other hand neither claim to be factual nor count on convincing the skeptic, conveying the *Absolute Existence* as an experience flashed in a fraction of moment like lightening on a dark night, seizing every thing in that fraction every thing and all at once and not progressively in stages, as life is it is on the basic level. Scriptures do not create *Existence* they only reveal it, expressing in human language what they were enlightened as experience the subject matter being always in existence, even before the search was intellectually sourced, reasoned and rationalized. Gods becomes only the deities presiding over powers and elements and are subject to the *cosmic law* as were humans and are punished and demoted even as humans were. The Gods appear supernatural only because they represent the enlightened outlook and approach living in a distinct metaphysical existence compared to the *asuras* and human beings who are observed to revel on gross physical existence. Therefore, in scriptures one finds gods and human interacting with no ontological divide between them, human calling gods to share their sacrificial offerings and gods coming down and sharing it.

In *Bhagavad Gita* we find clear mention of such interdependence of gods and men 'देवान्भावयतनेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः | परस्पर भावयन्तः श्रेयः पग्मवाप्स्यथ ||'. Search becomes transformed as expression of one's integral experience in words and speech but couched in symbols and suggestion transforming tales and legends, not claiming to be practical or factual but projecting as potential and possible. There remains nothing more to be experienced having been experience all at once and wholly, completely and in entirety. *Existence* becomes expressed as *That Which IS*, and not as what is designed and expected to be. One can

not hope to be spiritually enlightened of *Krishna* by being knowledgeable of his empirical and temporal life but by experiencing his *divine essence* using the empirical, temporal and mythical. As *George Santayana* remarks in his book *The Sense of Beauty*, '*Religion is human experience interpreted by human imagination. The idea that religion contains a literal, not symbolic representation of truth and life is simply and impossible idea. Whoever entertains it has not come within the region of profitable philosophizing on that subject*'.

The *Existence* existed billions and billions of eras earlier than when seer *Prajapati Parameshthi* was enlightened of the *Existence* as some thing as *Absolute Silence* as undifferentiated *comprehensive* totality, entirety and whole, ever and ever and always as ॐ the *Eternal Sound* neither with sign nor with any symbol, neither with any word nor any sound, neither as *non-Existence* nor as *Existence*, neither as air nor as the sky beyond, neither *Death* did exist then nor was the night; of the day was there no sign. Breathing alone with *self-impulse* was *That One*, other than that, there was nothing else. This indescribable state of existence was designated as *the First Principle, the Prime Existence* - सत्य, from the root अस् to be, to exist, becoming in turn the source of all *Wisdom* - विज्ञानघन. *Krishna* described this as his spiritual inclination, 'अक्षरं ब्रह्म परमं स्वभावोऽध्यात्ममुच्यते |', suggesting अक्षर to be the undifferentiated कर्ता, स्वभाव as the क्रिया and विसर्ग as the कर्म as the consequential differentiated creations, the *forms*, not the first or the only *form*, but one among the many earlier similar *forms* created, one in the long, beginningless, endless *forms* of existences. *Forms* have been and have ceased, even as they become born, evolved and finally cease to be. The *Existence* as the total *essence* behind all the *forms* existing as the eternal *Existence*, without any beginning at all designated as *the First Principle, the Prime Existence* - सत्य.

In creation nothing is accidental, every thing is purposeful. Nothing comes to be caused, without there being a *Cause* prior. Perhaps the word *'creation'* is not the proper word to be used, for what comes to be *caused* as *creation* is nothing but the effulgence of energy, शक्ति which as impulse of *Prime Existence* becomes the *Cause*. *Caused* is the *Creation*, the resultant *Existence*. It is empirical mind that sees *Cause* and the *Caused, Creator* and the *Creation* as different and distinct. For the spiritual mind *Cause* and the *Caused, Creator* and the *Creation* are one and same, *Caused* having existed in the *Cause* as the seed and the *Caused* having grown as the tree form the *Cause*. Even if one accepts the modern scientific thesis that *Creation* came in existence consequent to an explosion, one is lead to surmise that there must have been *something that exploded*. Something else was always there, whether it exploded or evolved slowly. Therefore, *Aruni* says in *Chhandogya Up.* that सत्य, *the Prime Existence* alone existed in the *beginning*, for how could any one accept that *Existence* could ever come from the *non-Existence*, as some hold? Therefore, सत्य, *the Prime Existence* alone existed - 'तदासीत्' *in the Beginning*, if there was any such thing as *beginning, the Prime Existence* existing eternally without *end*, if there is any such thing as *end*. Therefore, *the Prime Existence* is designated as the beginning, the intermediate and the end, the past, present and the future 'भूतं भवद्भविष्यदिति'. Therefore, nothing ever begins or nothing ever ends, because that which has beginning has also an end.

The moment the *First Principle* stirs, the first signs of effulgence become *the Second Principle*, the intermediate stage, designated as *Hiranyagarbha Prajapatya* manjfests as the sole custodian of all the creatures that were formed, upholding the space and world within self with a golden-wombed form, indistinct, indeterminate and amorphous as seed which would grow as the tree and yet endowed or pregnant with power and energy of manifestation and capable of identification in broad contours with energy resembling the flash of the luminous lightning or the roar a thunder, everything contracted and concentrated - 'हिरण्यगर्भः समवर्तताग्रे भूतस्य जातः पतिरेक आसीत्| स दाधार पृथिवीं द्यामुतेमां ...||'.

The *Third Principle* emerges having an anthropomorphic form - पुरुषविधः, *Purusha*, 'स वा अयं पुरुषः सर्वासु पुर्षु पुरिशयः, नैनेनं किंचनानावृतम्, नैनेन किंचनासंवृतम्||' acknowledging as अहं the *I*, अस्मि *Existence* and ब्रह्मन् effulgence -

'अहं वस्मास्मि'. *Purusha* becomes *Virat*, mightier than all, pervading the complete, whole and entirety of the creation on every direction and surpassing space by ten measures, 'सहस्रशीर्षा पुरुषः सहस्राक्षः सहस्रपात्| स भूमिं विश्वतो वृत्वाऽत्यतिष्ठद्दशाङ्गुलम्||' as the deity who measured the earthly regions, who upheld the lofty regions, thrice setting down his mighty steps - विष्णोर्नु कं वीर्याणि प्र वोचं यः पार्थिवानि विममे रजांसि | यो अस्कभायदुत्तरं सधस्थं विचक्रमाणस्त्रेधोरुगाय ||' becoming effulgent as the *birds* and animals, hymns, spells and charms, moon, sun, intellect, energy, breeze, earth and quarters, mid-region and heaven placed himself in all the worlds, the gods, the *Vedas*, the vital airs acquiring superiority over all others became identical with all of them. As *Purusha* became known by all the things that become manifest even as cow is known by the foot-marks it leaves. *Shatapath Brahmana* says that as *Narayana*, the Lord who abides in the eternal waters, performs the *Pancharatra* sacrifice for the five days.

Then animate and inanimate creation comes to be before the animate and inanimate creatures come to be formed,. *Krishna* says, 'भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च | अहङ्कार इतीयं मे भिन्न प्रकृतिरष्टधा ||' - creation becomes evolved प्रकृति as the eightfold divisions, first the five elements earth, water, fire, air and ether and then the mind, intellect and the I-sense sequentially, the undifferentiated becoming differentiated as *essence* (नाम) and the *form* (रूप), *essence* becomes posited in the *forms* to the tip of the nails as it were, even as oil is in sesame seeds, as butter in cream, as water in rivers, as fire in wood 'अहं वाव सृष्टिरस्मि अहं हीदं सर्व मसृक्षीति'. Therefore, *Isha Up* explains 'ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिद पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते | पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते || ईशा वास्यमिद सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत्| तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्य स्विद्धनम्||'. *That was Complete ; This is Complete. From Complete has the Comlete eveolved. The Complete having evolved the Complete, remains as, verily, the Complete. Therefore whatever exists in the wolrd is enveloped by the great Lord. Therefore one should enjoy what has been ordained with detachment and not coveting what has been ordained for others.*

When *Vyasa* observed becoming receptive, reflective and meditative on *Krishna's* all embracing and comprehensive personality, he saw that his life exhibits the primary attributes associated with *the Prime Existence, Narayana* who on becoming effulgent became *Vishnu* pervading the creation on every direction and surpassing space by ten measures. Therefore he found him to be an ideal symbol and metaphor to show how *the Prime Existence* becomes established in *gross form,* as Witness, Arbiter and the principal instrument for fulfilling the *divine intent* and *purpose*. *Vyasa's* inestimable and immeasurable genius lead *Krishna* to become venerated as the supreme god *Vishnu* in human *form* over generations and centuries and millenniums, making the *supreme Brahman* available to be accessed with an external *form* and foundation.

It is easier to know *Krishna* as the familiar temporal *form* as *Arjuna's* friend, relative, well-wisher and charioteer than as an impersonal *divine essence.* Even if one becomes completely enlightened of *Krishna* as *Brahman*, the supreme *Person*, पुरुषोत्तम he does not cease to fall back on the attributes and inclinations born of nature. *Arjuna* was the classic example who in spite of the luminous splendour रूपमैश्वरम्of the *divine essence* like the light of the thousand suns if they were to blaze forth all at once in sky, 'दिवि सूर्यसहस्रस्य भवेद्युगपदुत्थिता | यदि भाः सदृशी स्याद्भासस्तस्य महात्मनः ||', he was not fully enlightened being struck with amazement, his hair standing on end, 'विस्मयाविष्टो हृष्टरोमा', being frightened 'सगद्गदं भीतभीतः प्रणम्य', 'अदृष्टरूपं हृषितोऽस्मि दृष्टवा भयेन च प्रव्यथितं मनो मे |' requesting *Krishna* to show his pleasant form 'तदेव मे दर्शय देव रूपं प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास || किरीटिनं गदिनं चक्रहस्तमिच्छामि त्वां द्रष्टुमहं तथैव | तेनैव रूपेण चतुर्भुजेन सहस्रबाहो भव विश्वमूर्ते ||'. It is only when *Krishna* reverts to his human form Arjuna feels collected in mind 'दृष्टवेदं मानुषं रूपं तव सौम्यं जनार्दन | इदानीमस्मि संवृत्तः सचेताः प्रकृतिं गतः ||'.

How difficult to be enlightened of *the Prime Existence* and how difficult it is to retain that experience becomes evident when he confides in *Krishna*, that since he has forgotten what was communicated to him in the midst of the battle should be communicated again - 'विदितं मे महाबाहो संग्रामे समुपस्थिते | माहात्म्यं देवकीपुत्र तच्च ते रूपमैश्वरम्|| यत्तु तद्भवता प्रोक्तं तदा केशव सौहृदात्| तत्सर्वं पुरुषव्याघ्र नष्टं मे व्यग्रचेतसः || मम कौतूहलं त्वस्ति तेष्वर्थेषु पुनः प्रभो | भवांस्तु द्वारकां गन्ता नचिरादिव केशव ||'. Therefore, *Arjuna* asks *Krishna* to communicate the message again to him.

Therefore, *Krishna* too chides *Arjuna* saying, 'अबुद्धया नाग्रहीर्यस्त्वं तन्मे सुमहदप्रियम्| न च साऽद्य पुनर्भूयः स्मृतिमेऽ सम्भविष्यति || नूनमश्रद्दधानोऽसि दुर्मेधा ह्यसि पाण्डव | न च शक्यं पुनर्वक्तुमशेषेण धनञ्जय ||' It is through your inattentiveness that you were not enlightened and it is difficult for me to communicate the *Wisdom* again. Lightening does not, it is said, strike with the same intensity and in the same place twice. But *Krishna* is compassionate, therefore, what comes out as गुह्यं वैष्णवं धर्मशासनम्is *Anu Gita*. Even when *Krishna* completes his discourse on the battle field of *Kurukshetra* and asks *Arjuna* 'कच्चिदेतच्छ्रुतं पार्थ त्वयैकाग्रेण चेतसा | कच्चिदज्ञानसम्मोहः प्रनष्टस्ते धनञ्जय ||', his reply that his despondency is removed, memory regained, doubts resolved and he will do as instructed 'नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा त्वत्प्रसादान्मयच्युत | स्थितोऽस्मि गतसन्देहः करिष्ये वचनं तव ||'.

Therefore, it will be seen that Sun exists whether one sees it or not. It shines whether one wants it or not. On the wise ones as on the ignorant and obscure ones, Sun sheds its luminous light, even as on the blind and the deaf. It streams through the space warming layer by layer and rejuvenating. Descent of the *Divine essence* exists whether one is conscious or not, treading its steps in silent moments. But Divine *essence* is not from one who having eyes is not inclined to see, not from one who having ears is not inclined to hear. But being obscure in heart, blind in their sight and deaf in their ears they neither feel its presence, nor see him coming nor hear his steps treading. One has to be ever conscious and receptive for the light streams when one least expects it, sees it coming imperceptibly and hears the steps treading soundlessly. The first sentence which *Schopenhauer* wrote in his book *The World as Will and Idea*, was '*It remains completely unknown to us, what objects may be by themselves and apart from the receptivity of our senses. We know nothing but our manner of perceiving them; the manner being peculiar to us, and not necessarily shared by every being, though, no doubt, by every human being*'. As the Tao teacher says, '*The Tao is something blurred and indistinct. How indistinct! How blurred! Yet within it are images . . . things . . . mental power. Because this power is the most true within it there is confidence*'. Haiku poet describing his effort of understanding scriptures, '*We rowed in the fog, and out through the fog . . . O how blue, how bright the whole wide sea IS!*'.

When one becomes enlightened of the *divine essence* one is not conscious 'तथा प्रियया सम्परिष्वक्तो न बाह्यं किञ्चन वेद नान्तरमेवमेवायं पुरुषः प्राज्ञेनात्मना सम्परिष्वक्तो नबाह्यं किञ्चन वेद नान्तरं तद्वा अस्यैतदाप्तकाममात्मकाममकामं रूपं शोकान्तरम्||'. It is what *Krishna* refers as निर्वाण - 'शान्तिं निर्वाण परमम्' as the supreme state of peace and 'ब्रह्मनिर्वाणम्' integrating in *effulgence* of *the Prime Existence*. निर्वाण is terminating the ego-centric *form* and being in timeless, space less, changeless, eternal self-luminous peaceful *essence*, the *bliss*. It is what *Buddha* said '*This is Bliss . . . there is no sensation*' and when he was asked '*But how can there be Bliss when sensations no longer exist?*' he replied '*When sensations no longer exist, O brother, that, verily, is Bliss . . Just as the great savor has one single taste, the taste of salt, this Law and the discipline has one sensation, the sensation of liberation*'. It is '*ceasing to have lust, hatred, delusion*', '*perennial choice less awareness*'. It is the state where *the Prime Existence, Satya* alone is revealed *as IT IS*, luminous and resplendent and not concealed and obscure.

Enlightenment is not possible to be recognized through normal human sense organs because for recognition one has to cognize from mind the thoughts and concepts, opinions and memories stored therein. If there are no prior similar or identifiable experiences then for such the Sun does not shine nor offer any warmth on empirical level and speech returns with mind not able to recapture and recognize the enlightenment. Therefore, for those who set their thoughts on the un-manifest, *divine essence* the concealed by माया, the vivifying and captivating inscrutable formative power 'नाहं प्रकाशः सर्वस्य योगमायासमावृतः | मूढोऽयं नाभिजानाति लोको मामजमव्ययम्||. Neither by speech nor by mind nor by eyes it is possible to be accessed, how can one have it except saying that it exists 'नैव वाचा न मनसा प्राप्तुं शक्यो नचक्षुषा | अस्तीति ब्रुवतोऽन्यत्र कथं तदुपलभ्यते ||' except when the five senses and event the mind are laid to rest and even the intellect does not stir is the communion is possible - 'यदा पञ्चावतिष्ठन्ते ज्ञानानि मनसा सह | बुद्धिश्च नविचेष्टति तामाहुः परमा गतिः ||'.

When *the Prime Existence* exits in the undifferentiated state, *essence* is united with the *form*, it

being as large as a woman and man in close embrace 'स हैतावानास यथा स्त्रीपुमांसी संपरिष्वक्तौ |', the state being compared free from craving, free from evil, free from fear, when he knows nothing without or within, 'तद्वा अस्यैतदतिच्छन्दा अपहतपाप्मामयं रूपम्| तद्यथा पियया स्त्रीया संपरिष्वक्तो न बाह्यं किंचन वेद नान्तरम्...|'. Only when united with *form*, the *essence* has the power to manifest as palpable presence; without *form*, the *essence* cannot even stir 'शिवः शक्त्या युक्तो यदि भर्वति शक्तः प्रभावितुम्| न चेदएवं देवो न खलु कुशलः स्पन्दितुमपि ||'. *Purusha* is the *form* in which the eternal, immutable and luminous *universal Self essence* becomes posited. When *the Prime Existence* exits united with its energy शक्ति in the undifferentiated state, as the eternal, immutable and indestructible existing in the past, existing in the present and exist in the future as the indwelling energizing *essence* as 'अच्छेद्योऽयमदाह्योऽयमक्लेद्योऽशोच्य एव च | नित्यः सर्वगस्थ स्थाणुरचलोऽयं सनातनः || 'अव्यक्तोऽयमचिन्त्योऽयमविकार्योऽमनुश्नते |', the *self* in the body of the creation well unlike the *form* made of the elements, mind intellect and the *I-form* is impermanent, transient, fickle and fleeting nature, which did not exist in the past, exists only in the present and by its very nature of composition, ceases to exist in the future being subject to change becomes decayed, deteriorated and destroyed 'अन्तवन्त इमे देहा', 'वासांसि जीर्णानि', 'अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि व्यक्तमध्यानि ...अव्यक्तनिधनान्येव'.

Observing the duality of character with attributes and inclinations distinguished with different intensity *Krishna* says in *Bhagavad Gita* that he had provided two distinct *Paths* - *Sankhya* and *Yoga* to reveal his *divine essence* - 'लोकेऽस्मिन्द्विविधा निष्ठा पुग प्रोक्ता मयाऽनघ | ज्ञानयोगेन सांख्यानां कर्मयोगेन योगिनाम्||'. *Sankhya* is analyzing, harmonizing and synthesize the two forces in existence - *Purusha* as the inactive and *Prakriti* as the active. *Yoga* is the process of enjoining the *Purusha* and *Prakriti*, the active with the inactive culminating in समाधि equanimity of mind. Its is the state where the *I-sense*, अहंकार of the *form* becomes integrated with *I*, the अहं - *supreme essence* itself. सिद्ध is the one who has become qualified of what he was to become; the seed which has to become the tree. It is the river which has becomes enabled to criss cross every turn and every breach. It is the state where there is neither any journey nor any goal, transcending all journeys and goals. It is what *Sri Aurobindo* brings out as the essence of Kishna's message, '*There are in the world two different laws of conduct wach valid on its on plane, the rule principally dependent on the external status and entirely dependent on the thought and conscience. The Gita does not teach us to subordinate the higher plane to the lower, it does not ask the awakened moral consciousness to slay itself on the altar of duty as a sacrifice and victim to the law of the social status. It calls us higher not lower; from the conflict of the two planes it bids us to ascend to a supreme poise above the mainly practical, above the purely ethica, to the Brahmic consciousness. It replaces the conceptstion of social duty to divine obligation*'.

Of the two *Paths* - कर्म मार्ग is the *Path of Action* which is suggested for human beings who are energetic in life but are presently obscured by influence of senses and find it default to accept *Prime Existence* in any other form than in one which they are accustomed through traditional and social acceptance. कर्म मार्ग, the *Path of Action* as inductive methodology, as an ascent from the *known forms* to the *unknown essence* is recommended supplemented by disciplined actions restraint of senses, mind and intellect through austerity and penance. *Arjuna* who was circumspect to accept *Krishna's divine essence* as *Brahman* accustomed to see hi as friend, well wisher and advisor in human *form*, he explained in *Bhagavad Gita* the कर्म मार्ग with such lucidity and effectively as no where explained.

कर्म मार्ग is becoming concerned with subtle *essence, the self within* which is singularly indestructible, and the gross *form*, *the body without*, the *psyche*, the subtle *essence* being served, nurtured and evolved alone being the भोक्ता 'इन्द्रियाणि हयानाहुर्विषयाँस्तेषु गोचगन्| आत्मेन्द्रियमनोयुक्तं भोक्तेत्याहुर्मनीषिणः ||' as well as कर्ता - 'एष हि दृष्टा स्पष्टा श्रोता घाता रसयिता मन्ता बोद्धा कर्ता विज्ञानात्म पुरुषः ||' with active participation of the biological gross *form* as स्वधर्म. स्वधर्म is addressed to the *form* which is subject tie the attributes and inclinations born of *Prakriti*, in terms of which the Lord fashioned the वर्णाश्रम or the classification of actions to be performed by the *form* for the indwelling *self* having neither active *will* nor active desires. स्वधर्म is स्वभावप्त धर्म,

performance of ones actions as per one's attributes and inclinations, treating pleasures and pains, gain and loss, success or failure alike, liberating the *Purusha* from attachment to the desires and activities of the *Prakriti*. Withdrawal of one's *self* from attachment to the fruits arising from actions should lead one to be directed to the detachment of the actions themselves, surrendering even the performance of actions to the supreme *Self*. The equanimity which one attains thereby is called *Yoga*.

The central message of कर्म मार्ग therefore, is to perform one's actions as ordained by the gods for the welfare of the world order without attachment and without expectation of the fruits thereof with clear declaration 'कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते म्मा फलेपु कदाचम | मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ने सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ||'. Those who have fully integrated their intelligence in the actions performed by them renounce the fruits of their actions and thereby are liberated form the shackles of *samsara*. *Krishna* unhesitatingly attributes the confusion in *Arjuna's* mind to the flowery words propagated by those who revel in literal reading of *vedic* hymns transforming the institution of यज्ञ for enjoyment of fruits of their action. *Krishna* interprets यज्ञ established in earlier times by *Prajapati* for the welfare of the world order - 'महयज्ञाः पजाः मृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच पजापतिः | अनेन पसविष्यध्वमेष वोऽस्त्विष्टकामधुक्||' according to which creation came to be conceived consequent to a universal sacrifice विश्व यज्ञ performed, with *the Prime Existence* as the first of the obligations. As a result *the Prime Existence* became the creation itself, the act , actor and action all becoming identified with *Vishnu* comprehensively - यज्ञो वै विष्णुः for establishing the *cosmic law*, ऋत and *Perennial Principles*, धर्म for performance of actions.

Krishna sees the performance of all actions, from the lowest to the highest on universal dimension elevating the physical act to performance for and by way of sacrifice, यज्ञ, declaring all performance of actions not performed with that *intent and purpose* are sure to bind one to *Karma* 'यज्ञार्थात्कर्मणोऽन्यत्र लोकोयं कर्मवम्धनः | नदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्तसङ्गः समाचर ||'. कर्म मार्ग thus becomes an evolutionary *Path*, initiated for evolution and consummation of one's *self* with the universal *self*, not confining to the normal and natural cosmic process but penetrating the उत्तममृहस्यम to become liberated. कर्म मार्ग suggests what has not been and what one can become and what one has not been. Therefore, while *Krishna* communicates to *Arjuna* the ways to reach to his supreme *divine essence* as credible possibility, when and where the influence of senses fall on, it is for *Arjuna* himself to walk on the *Path* thus revealed for penetrating the उत्तमम्रहस्यम्. *Arjuna* does not appear energized being confused by the bewildering words even after these initial clarification about the concepts of *Sankhya* and *Yoga*, *Arjuna* is not inclined to accept his suggestion - 'मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्यात्मचेतसा | निराशीर्निर्ममो भूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः ||' as flowing from *supreme divine essence*.

ज्ञानमार्ग is the *Path of Wisdom* which *Krishna* speaks as the most suited for the receptive, reflective and meditative intellectuals, who are fully instructed in the wisdom of *Vedanta* and scriptural injunctions scriptural injunctions and with purified receptivity - 'वेदान्तविज्ञानसुनिश्चितार्थाः सन्न्यासयोगाद्यतयः शुद्धसत्त्वाः |'. It is the deductive methodology from the known empirical foundations to the unknown spiritual awareness. For such one nothing is accepted on belief and faith. Every thing is examined, scrutinized as intermediate and reasonable, rational suggestion and every word, sign and symbol, illustration analyzed and imperfections demystified through inquiry overcoming all impediments step by step पर्वाणि, and stage by stage धामानि to experiences the *unknown Prime Existence* as something neither created nor concluded but as something experienced as that existed with out beginning and without end, as the subtle, eternal and all pervading, omnipotent and omnipresent, the undifferentiated *That One* becoming differentiated in *essence* and *forms* - 'तद्धेदं तर्ह्यव्याकृतमासीत्तन्नामरूपाभ्यामेव व्याक्रियत असौनामायमिदंरूप इति ||'.

This is the *Path* which having traversed, *Ghora Angiras* initiated *Krishna* that in the final analysis the *self* within is indestructible, unshakable and the very essence of life - 'एतत्त्रयं पतिपद्येत अक्षितमसि अच्युतमसि पाणसंशितमसीति |'. It is the same *Path* which *Yajnavaalkya* spoke to *Maitreyi*, 'आत्मा वा अरे दृष्टव्यः श्रोतव्यो मन्तव्यो निदिध्यासितव्यो मैत्रेयि', the *Path* which *Maitri Up*. explains that they - *fire, air, sun, time breath, food,*

Brahman, Rudra, Vishnu are all the principal forms of the *Supreme*, the immortal and formless *Brahman*. To whomsoever one attaches himself in him he rejoices, since everything in the world is verily, *Brahman*. Therefore, he meditates on the forms, worships and discards, with them having moved higher and higher in the worlds and attain the *Purusha* 'अग्निर्वायुरादित्यः कालो यः प्राणोऽन्नं ब्रह्म रुद्रो विष्णुरिति एकेऽन्यं अभिवाद्यन्ति एकऽन्यम्|...ब्रह्मणो वा वैता अग्रस्यतनवः परस्यमृतस्य शरीरस्य तस्यैव लोके प्रतिमोदाति ह यो यस्यानुशक्ता इत्येवं हि आह | ब्रह्म खल्विदं व व सर्वम्...यावास्य अग्र्यास्तनवस्ताअभिध्ययेद अर्चयर्न्निह्नुयच्च | अतस्ताभि सहैरोपरि उपरि लोकेषु चरति | अतः कृत्स्नचय एकत्वं एति पुरुषस्य पुरुषस्य ||'. It is the same *Path* which *Shankara* recommended - 'नामोपास्मव ब्रह्मेति ब्रह्मबुद्धया | यथा प्रतिमां विष्णुबुद्ध्योपास्ने तद्वत्||'.

This is the *Path* which he traverses which the wise ones have spoken as sharp as edge of the razor, hard to cross and difficult to tread 'क्षुरस्य धारा निषिता दुरत्यया दुर्गम्० पथाते' overcoming all the intervening obstacles and captivating attractions on that Path - 'तस्मिञ्छुक्लमुत नीलमाहुः पिङ्गलं हरितं लोहितं च |'. This is the *Path* following which one becomes awakened and enlightened of the perilous and inaccessible place within each manifest creation where *Krishna*, the maker of the universe, the maker of all whose is the creation, who indeed in the creation, 'यस्यानुवित्तः प्रतिबुद्ध आत्माऽस्मिन्सन्देह्ये गहने प्रविष्टः | स विश्वकृत्स हि सर्वस्य कर्ता तस्य लोकः स उ लोक एव ||'. Verily while one is alive here (in human life) one may be enlightened of this if not one would unwise and great would be the loss for those who becomes enlightened to this become immortal and others to sorrow and suffer ruing - 'इहैव सन्तोऽथ विद्मस्तद्वयं न चेदवेदिर्महती विनष्टिः | ये तद्विदुरमृतास्ते भवन्त्यथेतरे दुःखमेवापियन्ति ||'

Arjuna's response to these two *Paths* is natural for every human beings who being deluded by influence of senses and by powerful *I-sense* born of nature - 'प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वशः | अहङ्कारविमूढात्मा कर्ता महमिति मन्यते ||' find it difficult to accept advise and obliged to make choice. Therefore he says : 'व्यामिश्रेणेव वाक्येन बुद्धिं मोहयसीव मे | तदेकं वद निश्चित्य येन श्रेयोऽहमाप्नुयाम्||'. The task of the Teacher is not offer solutions but to place one on the *Path* to deliverance from *non-Existence* to *the Prime Existence*, from obscurity to clarity, from mortality to immortality 'असतो मा सद्गमय तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय मृत्योर्मामृतं गमयेति |'. Therefore *Krishna* offers a balanced *Path* which balances the कर्म मार्ग which is likely to be influenced by senses organs while performing the actions with ज्ञानमार्ग which will take in to consideration the intellectual approach to the enlightened awareness. *Krishna* commends performing actions restraining mind in Yoga, योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय, बुद्धियुक्तो जहातीह उभे सुकृतदुष्कृते, कर्मजं बुद्धियुक्ता हि फलं त्यक्त्वा, यदा ते मोहकलिलं बुद्धिर्व्यतितरिष्यति, श्रुतिविप्रतिपन्ना ते यदा स्थास्यति निश्चला | समाधावचला बुद्धिस्तदा योगमवाप्स्यसि ||' and when intelligence, bewildered by scriptural words, shall stand unshaken and equanimous in intellect.

If परमात्मा, the *Supreme Self* has to become the final frontier, final goal, reaching the crest of the space above and depth of the ocean below, then one will be poorer not becoming conscious of the space between the crest of the space above and depth of the ocean below, because that is the place where the seekr hovers for long duration. Therefore, *Krishna* commends one to restrain senses influencing the *form* remain firm and well established in his spirit as the sure sign of one well established in his intellegenec 'तानि सर्वाणि संयम्य युक्त आसीत मत्परः | वशे हि यस्येन्द्रियाणि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ||'. *Krishna* suggests for overcoming one's weakness for influence of senses, where intelligence of those dazzled by attraction of pleasures is not well established in equanimity of the self 'भोगैश्वर्यप्रसक्तानां तयाऽपहृतचेतसम्| व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिः समाधौ न विधीयते ||', even minds of wise men being carried away by impetuous senses, 'यततो ह्यपि कौन्तेय पुरुषस्य विपश्चितः | इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि हरन्ति प्रसभं मनः ||', declaring that one has right only for actions to be performed and never for the fruits, therefore, one should neither desire fruits of one's actions nor neglect performance of actions 'कर्मण्येवाधिकारास्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन | मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ||'. But when *Krishna* says, 'कर्मजं बुद्धियुक्ता हि फलं त्यक्त्वा मनीषिणः | जन्मबन्धविनिर्मुक्ताः पदं गच्छन्त्यनामयम्||' it is not to suggest rejection of the fruits of actions but enjoying them as ordained by supreme Lord, renouncing attachment to them 'तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्य स्विद्धनम्|'. Then all desires cease to exist in mind, mind being equanimous in intelligence, like the tortoise which has drawn its limbs within the shell, all objects of sense turning away, though the taste remains, which will finally cease when one sees the Supreme Lord.

सङ्ग is relationship. Relationship causes attraction and attraction leads to attachment. So long as

attraction and attachment exists that long relationship exists. Once the attraction and attachment becomes exhausted, relationship decays, deteriorates and is destroyed. Scriptures do not commend renouncing possessions and position, wealth and well-being but only giving up attraction and attachment to them. अनासक्ति means neither psychological disinterestedness nor physical detachment. When one becomes disinterested and detached from possessions and position, wealth and well-being then he is said to be in *Nirvana*, detached to his body and its requirements and attachments, with heart and mind in silent adoration of the *supreme divine essence*, so that परमात्मा, the *Supreme Self* can rush to envelop the space, great rush of winds and powerful breeze destroying all the preconceived thoughts, ideas, concepts and memories.

Krishna does not speak of भक्ति as another *Path* or the third *Path* but speaks of भक्ति as convergence, communion and culmination of the two *Paths* ज्ञान and कर्म, with all-inclusive receptivity, reflection and meditation, like the two banks which gave a *form*, *shape* and *substance* to converge the flow of the river without being constrained or restricted or being attached and dissipating the energy on its long and arduous journey to join and merge with the *Ocean*. It is the heart alone which see the process as भक्ति the culmination, conclusion and communion. He who worships integrating mind with his action with complete and supreme receptivity, they are the ones considered perfect in yoga - 'मय्यावेश्य मनो ये मां नित्ययुक्ता उपासते | श्रद्धया परयोपास्ते मो युक्ततम मतः ||'. श्रद्धा is not belief in any god, religion or creed or faith in any person, *Guru* or anay institution. One can never be wise of *Krishna* as the *divine essence* if one continouosly and constantly relies on his impermanent, transient, fickle and fleeting *gross form*, maintaining, guarding, nurturing and elevating the *gross form* as the *divine essence* itself. श्रद्धा is being completely receptive without any preconditioned thoughts, ideas and copncepts and not adoring and worshipping but not only surrendering one's righteous disciplens 'तानि सर्वाणि संयम्य युक्त आसीत मत्परः |' and 'सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज' but becoming completely attauned to the divine essence, becoming in complete communion, completely adoring the divine essence becoming completely aligned with the divine essence 'यस्त्विन्द्रियाणि मनसा नियम्यारमतेऽर्जुन | कर्मेन्द्रियैः कर्मयोगमसक्तः स विशिष्यते ||', 'मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु |' which then becomes समर्पण of one's attributes along with inclinations - 'मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा | निराशीर्निर्ममो भूत्वा...||. It is like the caterpillar becoming the wasp out of fear of the wasp 'कीटः पेशस्कृता रुद्धः कुड्यायां तमनुस्मरन्| संरम्भभययोगेन विन्दते तत्सरूपताम्||'. .

भक्त would then by performing his actions कर्म*s* as ordained by ऋत and धर्म becomes ज्ञानि and to समाधि - equanimous intellect, the state which is describes as the *Purushottama svaroop*, from where there is no return 'यं प्राप्य न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ||', 'मामुपेत्य पुनर्जन्म दुःखालयमशाश्वतम्| नाप्नुवन्ति महात्मानः संसिद्धिं परमां गताः ||'. It is making one's heart emptied of अहंकार the *I-sense*, so that the Lord can dwell therein. The seeker reveres and worships him being devoted, does whatever he does, eats, sacrifices, gifts, austerities and disciplining his *self*, fixing his mind, making way for god to dwell therein, - 'यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत्| यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम्|| मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु | मामेवैष्यसि युक्त्वैवमात्मानं मत्परायणः ||'. In such consummation and communion भक्त loses his distinct form, character and identity. He does not see *Krishna* in parts or in fragments but as his own *self*, as one comprehensive, complete, whole and in entirety, or the non-dual personality 'यस्मिन्सर्वाणि भूतानि आत्मैवाभूद्विजानतः |', with no distinction or dichotomy between the internal and the external, mind meeting the heart, and the heart not rejecting what the mind suggests one as bad and accepting the other, being as one distinguished 'ज्ञानीनित्ययुक्त एकभक्तिर्विशिष्यते'. भक्ति is प्रेमस्वरूपा is of the form of intense love. Love gives, it does not demand. Love is emotive feeling not transactional trade. When one demands it ceases to be Love and becomes a bargain giving some thing against carnal, sensual desires to be fulfilled. Love is the metaphor which is used to denote intense desire for *Krishna*. *Narada* compares it to the intense love which Gopies of *Vraja* 'यथा व्रजगोपिकानाम्' had for *Krishna* and suffering caused by separation as *Narada* puts it 'तद्विस्मरणे परमव्याकुलता'. It is utter surrender समर्पण, भक्त giving way to *Krishna* to dwell in his heart opening evena small window, even as great winds lash out, tempests breeze never to

return. Gopies saw in *Krishna* a great lover, *Rukmini* saw in *Krishna* a पुरुषोत्तम, a great person. That is the difference between the loved one and the queen; *Radha* merges and becomes one with *Krishna*; *Rukmini* is consigned to flames, the soul reaching its domain as fashioned by *Karma*.

There is no one else than *Krishna* for भक्त, every thing he observes being transformed as *Krishna* as *Shankara* says - 'तत्र च दर्शनविषये ब्रह्मणि नेह नानास्ति किञ्चन किञ्चिदपि |'. The descent of the *divine essence* depends as much on the enterprise, energy and qualification of the *gross form* to be receptive as the grace of the *divine essence* to respond to that austere penance. Sun is same the Sunlight is also same but the recipient is asleep in deep slumber and inattentive to the Sunlight streaming through the window. Even when Sun warms his body, the recipient will neither feel it nor enlightened by the warmth of *Krishna's divine essence*. It is not *Krishna's divine essence* which is far away from the recipient it is the recipient who is far away from *Krishna's divine essence*.

परमात्मा is what one is intrinsically capable and entitled to be but has not been. Unless one wakes up from slumber, bridging and connecting the two seemingly distinct and different banks of the singularly common stream of enlightenment balancing, harmonizing and synthesizing one with other, one will not be able to reach to the other side, beyond both the purely ethical and practical *form* to the purely moral and meditative *essence*, where the supreme bliss is waiting as the *Brahmic consciousness*. *Krishna* as a human being was completely enlightened of the *divine essence* established in him, which he gave expression not generally but in rare moments, which only few exceptionally enlightened persons like *Markandeya, Narada and Vyasas* were fully conscious of, observing it palpably present in his thoughts, speech and actions, some other like *Bhishma, Vidura, Sanjaya, Panadavas* and few others being aware having been informed of it by the sensitive seers while large number of others either accepted him as great human being well respected in the three worlds or complexly inimical to him being obscure of his *divine origin*.

ज्ञानमार्ग and कर्ममार्ग, therefore, are not to be treated as exclusive. *Krishna* follows a distinctive line of development, beginning first with the partial precision with hints and suggestion of accuracy. In *Bhagavat Purana* he says that the one whose intelligence and inclination are harmonized realizing the Self with intellectual reasoning, knowing that any difference between the two is mere fantasy is known as intelligent renunciation विद्वत्संन्यास. To the intelligent he is the much loved goal as well as the instrument, the heaven as well the release, no other object being dearer. Therefore only he whose mind is purified and perfected with *Knowledge* (ज्ञान) and *Wisdom* (विज्ञान) attains his supreme state - 'ज्ञानिनस्त्वहमेष्टः स्वार्थो हेतुश्च संमतः | स्वर्गश्चैवापवर्गश्च नान्योऽर्थो मदृते प्रियः || ज्ञानविज्ञानसंसिद्धाः पदं श्रेष्ठं विदुर्मम | ज्ञानी प्रियतमोऽतो मे ज्ञानेनासौ बिभर्ति माम्||'. If the two *paths* are traversed as separate, distinct and exclusive and do not coalesce then one would know and accept *Krishna* in parts either as the *divine essence* or as the *human form*, being deprived of the experience of the one or the other. These two *Paths* are referred as साधना and not उपासना. In साधना some effort some austerity and penance is required. In no such thing is required except keeping oneself in meditative state continuously. *Shankara* compares *upasana* to uninterrupted flow of oil by which an object is approached by visualizing, dwelling on it for long period of time 'उपासनं नाम यथाशास्त्रं उपास्यार्थस्य विषयीकरणेन सामीप्यमुपगम्य तैलधारावत्समानप्रत्ययप्रवाहेण दीर्घकालं यदासनम्||'.

Therefore, if these *paths* are traversed together as different or complementary, then the experience of ज्ञानमार्ग and कर्ममाग becomes comprehensively coalesced, penance being strengthened, the meditation becoming consummated as communion - भक्ति complete, whole and in entirety, there being no distinction or dichotomy between the internal and the external, mind meeting the heart, and the heart not rejecting what the mind suggests. *Krishna* says that even though there are four kinds of people the man in distress, seeker of *Knowledge*, seeker of wealth and the seeker of *Wisdom* who seek communion with the divine essence, the one who is ever in communion with the divine, whose devotion is single minded is the best; *Krishna* is supremely dear to him as he is to him 'चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनोऽर्जुन | आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी

च भरतर्षभ || तेषां ज्ञानी नित्ययुक्त एकभक्तिर्विशिष्यते | प्रियो हि ज्ञानिनोऽत्यर्थमहं स च मम प्रियः ||', even as those who surrender their mind and actions to him with full श्रद्धा receptivity reflection and meditation 'ये तु सर्वाणि कर्माणि मयि सन्यस्य मत्पराः | अनन्येन योगेन मां ध्यायन्त उपासते || always adore with disciplined determination - 'सततं कीर्तयान्तो मां यतन्तशच दृढव्रताः | नमस्यन्तश्च मां भक्त्या नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ||' for them he brings attainment of what they possess not and security of what they possess 'तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ||'.

When *Narada* says 'सा त्वस्मिन्परमप्रेमस्वरूपा |' he does not equate love with physical attraction or carnal desires. Without love physical attraction or carnal desires are fickle, momentary, transient and impermanent like that of a courtesan 'तद्विहीनं जारणामिव' whereas love is eternal, immutable and indestructible getting which one becomes one becomes deeply absorbed, as it were, becomes completely silent in mediation as it were, becomes luminous in one's self, as it were 'यज्ज्ञात्वा मत्तो भवति स्तब्धो भवति आत्मरामो भवति |'. Physical attraction or carnal desires love offers. Therefore, परमात्मा, the *Supreme Self* needs love and not physical attraction or carnal desires. *Radha*, born human became the epitome of Love, *Rukmini* born human remained till the end the Queen.

परमात्मा is difficult to be accessed and known because he is *the Prime Existence* who existed before the knower was known to exist. Since the knower had no earlier thought, concept or an idea of *the Prime Existence* he can not recollect him from his mind, the empirical memory bank, because besides the embodied beings whose thoughts are set on the un-manifest, *divine essence* finding it difficult, arduous and painful to be experienced - 'क्लेशोऽधिकतरस्तेषामव्यक्तासक्तचेतसाम्| अव्यक्ता हि गतिर्दुःखं देहवद्भिरवाप्यते ||', human beings access their own memory for familiar forms and symbols differentiating as रूप *gross form*, the *form* for the *formless*, mortal for the immortal, gross for the subtle, to format the idea of undifferentiated supreme *Brahman, the Prime Existence* who is not made of flesh and bones but completely transcendental, beyond the limits of sense perception -'अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सन्|'. But it is a form nonetheless 'ॐ श्री कृष्णाय नमः ॐ सच्चिदानन्द रूपाय नमो नमः |' 'ईश्वरापरमो कृष्णः सच्चिदानन्दविग्रहः अनादिर् आदिर् गोविन्दः सर्व कारणकारणः ||'.

All civilizations have their own concept of gods, beginning with some invisible force acquiring largely anthropomorphic gross *form* drawn from their own empirical experiences though not all in visual and iconic representation some even finding it blasphemous. Early civilization which streamed from the Egypt watered by Nile to the fertile lands of Euphrates and traveling across the Iranian coast line to reach Sindhu and Sarasvti rivers conceptualized their divinities in iconic forms. The *Aryans* and the religions which originated in Israel and Arabia conceived the divine essence as some thing ethereal, vague, and indistinct and other worldly. However while *Aryans* seem to have accepted visual and iconic representation in gross forms like *linga-yoni* as well as many animate and inanimate forms being conceived as subtle *divine essence* presiding over the forms of energies, elements, when the religions of non-*Arya* communities became integrated with *vedic* religion. But the religions which originated in Israel and Arabia remained true to their belief though their scriptures stated that God fashioned human beings in his own image.

When *Arjuna* asked *Krishna* to his various divine manifestations 'वक्तुमर्हस्यशेषेण दिव्या ह्यात्मविभूतयः | याभिर्विभूतिभिर्लोकानिमांस्त्वं व्याप्य तिष्ठसि || कथं विद्यामहं योगिंस्त्वां सदा परिचिन्तयम्| केषु केषु च भावेषु चिन्त्योऽसि भगवन्मया ||', it is through such visual iconic *forms* that *Krishna* elaborates his resplendent forms - 'आदित्यानामहं विष्णुः .. रुद्राणां शङ्करश्चास्मि .. वेदानां सामवेदोऽस्मि .. देवानामस्मि वासवः .. महर्षिणां भृगुरहं .. सिद्धानां कपिलो मुनिः .. इन्द्रियाणां मनश्चास्मि .. भूतानामस्मि चेतना .. मेरु शिखरिणामहम् .. सरसास्मि सागरः .. स्रोतसामस्मि जाह्नवी .. अश्वत्थः सर्ववृक्षाणां .. प्रह्लादाश्मि दैत्यानां .. अनन्तश्चास्मि नागानां .. मृत्युः सर्वहरश्चाहम्.. उद्भवश्च भविष्यताम्.. द्यूतं छलयतास्मि .. दण्डो दमयतास्मि .. वृष्णिनां वासुदेवोऽस्मि पाण्डवानां धनञ्जयः . . मुनीनामप्यहं व्यासः . . कवीनामुशना कविः .. यच्च सर्वभूतानां बीजं तदहमर्जुन | न तदस्ति विना यत्स्यान्मया भूतं चराचरम्||', declaring finally, 'नान्तोऽस्मि मम दिव्यानां विभूतीनां परंतप | एष तूद्देशतः प्रोक्तो विभूतेर्विस्तरो मया || यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा || अथवा बहुनैतेन किं ज्ञातेन तवार्जुन | विष्टभ्याहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत्||'.

As conclusion and consummation of *upanishdic* statement, 'ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किंच जगत्याम्जगत्' and 'अहं वाव सृष्टिरस्मि, अहं हीदं सर्वामसृक्षीति | ततः सृष्टिरभवत्|' and his own statement 'अविभक्तं च भूतेषु विभक्तमिव च स्थितम्| भूतभर्तु च तज्ज्ञेयं

ग्रसिष्णु प्रभविष्णु च ||' one accepts that nothing in creation exists where his presence is not experienced - the gods, the demons and the men are all born in him and becomes extinguished in him 'न तदस्ति क्वचिद्राजन्यत्राहं न प्रतिष्ठितः | न च तद्विद्यते भूतं मयि यन्न प्रतिष्ठितम्|| एवं सर्वं जगदिदं सदेवासुरमानुषम्| मत्तः प्रछवते राजन् मय्येव प्रविलीयते ||'. Then one is obliged to accept *Brahman* being not only *in everything* but *everything* and if everything in creation is the manifestation as the *essence* and *form* of that *Brahman*, then one, the fragment in who becomes enlightened to that undifferentiated *That One*, *Brahman*, smelled, seen, heard, spoken, thought and understood all becoming *Brahman* 'यत्र वा अस्य सर्वमात्मैवाभूत्तत्केन कं जिघ्रेत्... पश्येत्... श्रुणुयात्... अभिवदेत्... मन्वीत ... विजानीयात्|'.

One who experiences thus he too experiences *Divine essence* in every creation around him in the spirit of *Isha Up.* which declares, 'ईशा वास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किंच जगत्यां जगत्|', 'यस्तु सर्वाणि भूतानि आत्मन्येवानुपश्यति | सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं ततो न विजुगुप्सते || यस्मिन्सर्वाणि भूतानि आत्मैवाभूद्विजानतः | तत्र को मोहः कः शोकः एकत्वमनुपश्यत ||', therefore in every surrounding, the animate and inanimate creatures, the mountains and the rivers, the trees and the flowers, Sun shedding warmth, clouds shedding cool rains, earth invigorating the seeds to sprout as plants, plants becoming trees and trees producing seeds, as well as earthquakes shaking the earths, volcanoes spewing molten rocks, tempests blowing across the oceans, rains lashing out in floods, rivers inundating the banks turning the cycle again and again, accepting the love and compassion, non-violence and mercy, no one complaining or demanding explanations, accepting all acts and events as flowing from *dispensation of the divine essence*, ordainer, guide and supervisor of ऋत, the *cosmic law* in operation wholly, completely and in entirety experiencing the presence of *divine essence* in every thing and every where, in every thought speech and action unequivocally, unambiguously and undeniably.

Narada says, 'यल्लब्ध्वा पुमान सिद्धो भवति, अमृतो भवति, तृप्तो भवति |'. सिद्ध is one who has become what he could have become and what has now become. Like the seed planted and it becoming a plant and a tree. सिद्ध is one for who there is no more साधना or any thing to be sought as साध्य. अहंकार - the *I-form* or the *I-sense* becomes terminated and not अहं the *I*, the *self* which one truly represents. Therefore, that is what is meant - 'भूतग्रामः स एवायं भूत्वा भूत्वा प्रलीयते | रात्र्यागमेऽवशः पार्थ प्रभवत्यहरागमे || परस्तस्मात्तु भावोऽन्योऽव्यक्तात्सनातनः | यः स सर्वेषु भूतेषु नश्यत्सु न विनश्यति || अव्यक्तोऽक्षर इत्युक्तस्तमाहुः परमां गतिम्| यं प्राप्य न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम || पुरुषः स परः पार्थ भक्त्या लभ्यस्त्वनन्यया | यस्यान्तःस्थानि भूतानि येन सर्वमिदं ततम्||'. Thus does *Krishna* leads one from the *Third Principle* to the *First Principle* and telling it is he himself who as the *Purushottama* is lodged in each manifest creation, 'स वा अयं पुरुषः सर्वासु पुर्षु पुरिशयः,' and is known 'अहं वैश्वानरो भूत्वा प्राणिनां देहमाश्रितः |...वेदैश्च सर्वैरहमेव वेद्यो'.

Therefore, one must not study *Krishna's* temporal life laterally, serially or sequentially as narrated but as a testament and testimony of how the non-dual, singular and undifferentiated *Prime Existence* becomes differentiated as *Creator* and *Creation*, *essence* and the *form*, *Purusha* and *Prakriti*, the *essence* of *Purusha* entering *form* of the *Prakriti*, to the tip of the fingures, as it were. And how again the differentiated *Prime Existence* found its foundation, the source coalescing, harmonizing and synthesizing the contrary and contradictory expressions in manifestation through thoughts, speech and actions, as clarified 'मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना | मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः ||'. One should recognize in *Krishna* the sptritual journey of the fragment of supreme *Bahman* which has having taken upon oneself to coalesce, harmonize and synthesize the contrary and contradictory expressions in thoughts, speech and actions as no one else or no where else in the world did, having in the words of *William Blake* seen a world in a grain of sand and a heaven in a wild flower, holding infinity in the palm of his hand and eternity in an hour has claimed with supreme confidence that he is the God, the supreme Being, *Brahman*.

Even when *Krishna* explains that the spiritual truths and mystical secrets which he instructed to him since he is 'भक्तोऽसि मे सखा चेति रहस्यं ह्येतदुत्तमम्|' was also revealed by him earlier 'स एवायं मया तेऽद्य योगः प्रोक्तः पुरातनः |' to *Surya* who having handed over to others down the ages were lost by efflux of *Time* 'एवं परंपराप्राप्तमिमं राजर्षयो विदुः | स कालेनेह महता योगो नष्टः परंतप || स एवाय मया तेऽद्य प्रोक्तः पुरातन |, *Arjuna* becomes skeptical wondering, 'अपरं भवतो जन्म

परं जन्म विवस्वतः | कथमेतद्विजानीयां त्वमादौ प्रोक्तवानिति ||', even though he is reported to be none other than *Nara*, *Krishna's* own ancient companion explained. *Krishna* was obliged to tell him that there have many births for both of them which he knows but *Arjuna* does not 'बहूनि मे व्यतीतानि जन्मानि तव चार्जुन | तान्यहं वेद सर्वाणि न त्वं वेत्थ परंतप ||' and though he is unborn *Brahman*, he has establish himself in *Prakriti*, 'अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोपि सन्| प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय सम्भवाम्यात्ममायया ||' therefore communicating is again the mystery because he is dear to him and devoted in addition 'भक्तोऽसि मे सखा चेति रहस्यं ह्येतदुत्तमम्||'. *Krishna* is not one gross material but flowing stream of consciousness. If one jumps in that stream and one will be acquire the same colour as the consciousness has. The bliss of being submerged cannot be explained as one dumb can not express the taste, 'अनिर्वचनीयम्प्रेमस्वरूपम्| मूकास्वादनवत्|' as *Narada* describes.

Vyasa elaborates the mystery of *Krishna's divine descent* in the three stages of manifestation as अधिभौतिक stage (*elemental or concerning the mind and ten sense organs of perception and action*), अधिदैविक stage (*deities presiding over the mind and sense organs*) and अध्यात्मिक stage (*the spiritual stage distinct and superior to* अधिभौतिक and अधिदैविक stages).

अधिभौतिक is the stage where भूतग्रामः - the multitude of animate and inanimate beings, differentiated as *essence* and *forms* come to be from the undifferentiated *Brahman* born of Nature and responding to attributes and inclinations and shaped by relationships, social and religious varying from persons, places and periods and cease to be returning repeatedly to the undifferentiated *Brahman* 'अव्यक्ताद्व्यक्तयः सर्वाः प्रभवन्त्यहरागमे | रात्र्यागमे प्रलीयन्ते तत्रैवाव्यक्तसंज्ञके || भूतग्राम स एवायं भूत्वा भूत्वा प्रलीयते | रात्र्यागमेऽवशः पार्थ प्रभवत्यहरागमे ||'. अधिदैविक is the (luminous) stage where the *subtle divine essence* is presented posited in *gross forms* as response to the human need to have intermediate medium for transcending to the supreme *Brahman*. Therefore by withdrawing senses from the organs and becoming detached from the external things, one comes to meditate on *Brahman* as possessed of the qualities, just as *Shalagram* is used for realizing *Vishnu* 'यथा विष्णोः शालग्रामः | अस्मिन्हि सर्वविकारशून्यं देहे नामरूपव्याकरणाय प्रविष्टं सदाख्यं ब्रह्म जीवेनात्मनेयुक्तम्| तस्मादस्मिन्हृदयपुण्डरीके वेश्मनि उपसंहृतकरणैर्बाह्यविषयविरक्तैः विशेषतो ब्रह्मचर्यसत्यसाधनाभ्यां युक्तैः वक्ष्यमाणगुणवद्ध्यायमानैर्ब्रह्मोपलभ्यत इति प्रकरणार्थः ||'. This stage is superior to the अधिभौतिक (*elemental*) stage is another unmanifest eternal unmanifest, अव्यक्तोऽव्यक्तात्सनातनः, which is not perishing even after all the beings perish 'परस्तस्मात्तु भावोऽन्योऽव्यक्तोऽव्यक्तात्सनातनः | यः स सर्वेषु भूतेषु नश्यत्सु न विनश्यति ||'.

Krishna suggests that when one takes a leap from the अधिभौतिक stage described as क्षर and अधिदैविक stage described as अक्षर - 'द्वाविमौ पुरुषौ लोके क्षरश्चाक्षर एव च | क्षरः सर्वाणि भूतानि कूटस्थोऽक्षर उच्यते ||' one reaches the supreme अध्यात्मिक stage which is 'उत्तमः पुरुषस्त्वन्यः परमात्मेत्युदाहृतः | यो लोकत्रयमाविश्य बिभर्त्यव्यय ईश्वरः || यस्मात्क्षरमतीतोऽहमक्षरादपि चोत्तमः | अतोऽस्मि लोके वेदे च प्रथितः पुरुषोत्तमः ||' attaining his निराकार - *formless form* which is described as पुरुषोत्तमस्वरूप, the supreme stage one does not return to *samsara* 'अव्यक्तोऽक्षर इत्युक्तस्तमाहुः परमां गतिम्| यं प्राप्य न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम || पुरुषः स परः पार्थ भक्त्या लभ्यस्त्वनन्यया | यस्यान्तःस्थानि भूतानि येन सर्वमिदं ततम्||'. This stage cannot be accessed by one whose mental and intellectual response is still under the influence of senses which prevents him from perceiving his निराकार पुरुषोत्तमस्वरूप as one would perceive an *amaluka* fruit in the palm of one's hand 'करतलामलकवत्साक्षात् अपरोक्षीकृत्या'.

If in the present times a person like *Mohandas Karmachand Gandhi* has been recognized and acknowledged as a great soul *Mahatma* by a perceptive poet like *Rabindranath Tagore* in spite of known and unknown temporal weakness recorded making even a great scientist like *Einstein*, deeply influenced by his personality was obliged to acknowledge that '*Generations to come will scarce believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth*', there is not reason why a personality like *Krishna* who displayed comprehensive and all pervading human and divine attributes to different segments of society in his days should not come to be revered in the generation to comes, being elevated as *divine essence* come to be established in human form.

Chhandogya Up. (V.x) mentions that the pure souls who perfect their penance through receptivity and intense austerities take देवयान, the luminous *Path* of the gods, which is also acknowledged

in *Rigveda* (I.72.vii) where *Agni* becomes the intermediary carrying the offerings made for the gods by yearning human beings for the gods 'अस्मे वत्सं परि षन्तं न विन्दन्निच्छन्तो विश्वे अमृता अमूरः | श्रमयुवः पदव्यो धियंधास्तस्थुः पदे परमे चार्व ग्नेः ||'. Those souls who perform their actions as and by way of sacrifice for the welfare of the worlds take पितृयान, the *Path* taken by their ancestors and after experiencing the fruits of their actions (कर्म*s*) return with the residual कर्म*s*. Thus both देवयान and पितृयान depend upon whether one adopts the ज्ञानमार्ग or the कर्ममार्ग.

Brihad Aranyak Up. explains this comparing human being to a tree and queries when a tree that is felled rises up again from what source does it rise having a newer form, a caution is expressed not to just say that from semen as the source because semen is produced only in one who is living and not from the dead. It is possible for a tree to spring even from a seed 'रेतस इति मा वोचत जीवतस्तत्प्रजायते | धानारुह इव वै वृक्षोऽञ्जसा प्रेत्य सम्भवः ||'. Therefore, from which root source does a human being springs forth after he is dies, if one thinks that he is born again, no he is not born. Then who causes him to be born again? Indeed it is *Wisdom, Bliss, Brahman*, which exists as the supreme source that gives the form the energy and splendour 'मतर्यः स्विान्मृत्युना वृक्णः कस्मान्मूलात्प्ररोहति || जत एव; न जायते, कोन्वेनं जनयेत्पुनः || विज्ञानमानन्दं ब्रह्म रातिर्दातुः परायणम्तिष्ठमानस्य तद्विद इति ||'.

This opens one's mind to many possibilities. The Lord has provided the creation with limited possibility to creating and arranging *forms* to be prepared, the energy, power, the *divine essence* within those *forms* being dependent on his grace. Even after creating a *form* if there is no *divine dispenation* no creation would ever be possible. If through noble thoughts and righteous intent copulation brings out a proper and propitious *form* then there is every possibil*i*ty for some noble soul to enter that form to fulfill the *divine intent* and *righteous purpose*. If through ignoble thoughts and unrighteous intent copulation under the influence of senses brings out a improper and evil *form* then there is every possibil*i*ty for some ignoble and evil soul to enter that *form* fulfilling evil deeds and unrighteous purposes. Therefore, on high ethical and moral grounds it is suggested that copulation should be desired for sensual pleasure but as sacrifice as and for the regen*e*ration of life.

Brihad Aranyak Up. (VI.iv) has elevated the entire procreation ceremony to a high moral, ethical and metaphysical level. *Shankara* commends this verse saying that the same is introduced to lay down the procedure to obtain progeny who by his manner of birth and conception and good attributes would be ready to fulfil his goal in life. The *upanishad* makes an important point that the semen which prepares the form is made of the essenec of the earth, water, herbs, flowers, fruits, man aand finally his seed. Therefore, *Praajapati* created woman as the wholesome abode for the seed which is quintessence of पकृति the manifest creation. *Krishna* commenting that therefore a man if born of attributes and inclinations born of पकृति 'पकृतेः कियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वशः |'.

Since entire procreation is *yoga* perfomed to fulfil the *divine intent* and *purpose* in furtherance of the evolutionery cycle, scriptures suggest procreation as divine purpose, forms created as divinely intented and not destroyed but nurtured because as *Krishna* himself pertinently points out that any form of *Yoga* is difficult to be attained by one who has not restrained his *self* but it is attainable by perseverance and perfected penance. Neither here in the worlds nor in the worlds hereafter is there any destruction for him, for never does he who treads the path of righteousness will ever have any regrets. Having attained the world of righteousness and dwelling there for years he even though fallen from the away from the yoga is born again in the house of such as are pure and prosperous. But those who fail either to perfect their penance through receptivity and intense austerities or to perform their actions as and by way of sacrifice for the welfare of the worlds but whose conduct has been good will attain good birth as *Brahmin*, *Kshatriya* or *Vaishya*, as *Krishna* says 'प्राप्य पुण्यकृतां लोकानुषित्वाशाश्चतीः समाः | शुचिनां गेहे यागिभ्ष्टोऽभिजायते ||' and those whose conduct has been evil will attain evil birth as a dog, a hog or a *chandala*.

Therefore, what *Devaki* and *Vasudeva* provided was the *gross form* in which the *divine essence* as *Wisdom, Bliss, Brahman* came to established as *Krishna* for destruction of the unrighteous and

establsihing righteouness. *Krishna's* choosing *Devaki* and *Vasudeva* as his parents made them resplendent and holy for generations to come, even as Mohandas Karmachand Gandhi having Putlibai and Karmachand as parents made them resplendent for generations. Lord had earlier assured *Prahlad* that his father *Hiranykashipu* having been purified by the divine touch मदङ्गस्पर्शनिनाङ्ग लोकान्यास्यनि मुप्रजाः along with twenty one earlier generations by his having born in their race 'त्रिसप्तभिः पिता पूतः पितृभिः सह ते अनघ | यत्साधोऽस्य गृहे जातोा भवान्वै कुलपावनः ||'. If such be the benediction for one who is devoted to *Krishna*, then how much more blessed would be the parents who became the instrument and medium for the Supreme Lord to condescend for establishing himself for destroying the unrighteous and establish righteousness. All become even as a caterpillar becomes transformed as a wasp one with the Supreme Lord at the very last moment, even as princes inimical to *Krishna* became one with him, through constant thinking on him.

Threfore in अधिभौतिक stage *Krishna* represents as one who descends to establish righteousness - 'यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत | अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम्|| परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय दुष्कृतानाम्| धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ||' as one born in *Devaki's* womb as the *divine essence* established in *prakritik* form - 'प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय सम्भवाम्यमायया ||' in the homes of noble people - 'तदाहं सम्पसूयामि गृहेषु शुभकर्मणाम्|' disciplining the limits of morality - 'आविश्य मानुषं देहं मर्यादाबन्धकारणात्||' subjecting himself to the limitation of the attributes and inclination born of *Prakriti* -'प्रकृतेः कियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वशः |'. In temporal life *Krishna* appears as dual personality possessed of नाम-रूप, smelling another, seeing another, hearing another, understanding another, performing all actions as any human being would, influenced by attributes and inclinations born of प्रकृति as he himself informed *Uttanka Bhargava*. Therefore, there should be no concern if one finds many instances which appear contary, contradictory and strange for one who is born as *divine Person* for establishing righteousness and as one who came to respected not only in his own time as descent of the great seer *Narayana* and associating the display of his *divine essence* with the great God, *Sri Vishnu-Narayana* himself an yet performs action which are so common to be found in normal human beings.

As child and adolescent he conducts himself like cowherd convincing his people to worship the *Goverdhana* mountain on whom the community depended for agriculture and food foe the cows and their livelihood, instead performing sacrifices to please *Indra* 'नित्यं वनैकसम्नान वनशैलवासिनः ||'. When coming of age, he dethrones the unrighteous *Kamsa* who had usurped his father's throne against all norms of क्षत्र order, kills him and as a matured person enthrones *Ugrasena*, father of the slain prince against the popular demand for him to take over the reigns.

The extra-ordinary feet of liberating people from atrocious rule, his reluctance to be king himself as brave chastiser would, makes him accepted in the comity of nations as a wise statesman, a great human being with extraordinary courage and righteousness, making even *Duryodhana* laud - 'स हि पूज्यतमो लोके कृष्णः पृथुलोचनः | त्रयाणामपि लोकानां विदितं मम सर्वथा ||'. Then as one conscious of preserving क्षत्र order and destroying those opposing it, *Krishna* shifts his sight and deputes *Akrura* to *Hastinapura* to inquire about the wellbeing of his aunt *Kunti* and *Pandavas* who were troubled by *Kaurava* cousins, though does not have much success. Seeing *Jarasandha* increasing his raids on *Mathura* to avenge the killing of his son-in-law *Kamsa* he fight bravely but seeing his people were no match to challenge the great might of the king of *Magadha*, moves his tribes as a wise and shrewd statesman with political pragmatism, military wisdom to distant *Dvaraka* on the west coast of India. In the new region he had confront *Jarasandha* again along with his close companions, *Shishupala, Shrugal* and *Paundraka*. He kills both *Shrugal* and *Paundraka* and then places their sons on the respective thrones. *Shishupala* faces humiliating defeat and *Jarasandha* is defeated by *Balarama*. *Jarasandha* and *Shishupala* approach *Kalayavana* for his help, whom *Krishna* does not engage *Kalayavana* directly but gets him reduced to ashes by sage *Muchukunda's* fury.

After settlement in *Dvaraka*, his visits to *Pandavas* become rare and infrequent though he keeps himself well informed of their travails in their exile during their travails in *Varanavrata* and

thereafter. *Krishna* meets them again during *Draupadi's svayamvara* when he sees them in *Brahmins'* attire. Extremely pleased with undoubted affection, he points them to *Balarama* with excitement. When *Arjuna* wins the winsome bride, he along with *Balarama* goes secretly to meet them, where he meets *Kunti* and consoles for their adversity during their exile. He assures them of his friendship. From that time onward *Krishna's* relation with *Pandavas* progresses with caring concern and camaraderie which is reciprocated by *Pandavas* as a well wisher, friend, advisor, and a counselor. Among all brothers *Arjuna* was closer to him being of the same age and becomes partial after his sister *Subhadra* marries him. He declares that *Arjuna's* friend is his friend and whoever hates *Arjuna* is his enemy as well.

As a shrewd diplomat he was to tell *Arjuna* that in the struggle between war and peace if he has assumed responsibility then one should take sides only with them who are beneficial. Though by tilling and manicuring the land one fulfils one's enterprise but if rains do not fall then no crop would come and there could be draught due to *divine will*. Therefore men of wisdom have declared that for successful culmination, human enterprise and *divine will* both are required. Therefore, one should perorm one's duties to the best of one's ability through speech and action ssince he has no control on *divine will*. 'सर्वं त्विदं ममायत्तं बीभत्सो कर्मणोर्द्वयोः | क्षेत्रं हि रसवच्छुद्धं कर्मणैवोपपादितुम्|| ऋते वर्षान्न कौन्तेय जातु निवर्तयेत्फलम्| नत्र वै पौरुषं बूयुरासेकं यत्र कारितम्|| तत्र चापि ध्रुवं पश्येच्छोषणं दैवकारितम्| तदिदं निश्चितं बुद्धया पूर्वैरपि महात्मभिः || दैवे च मानुषे चैव संयुक्तं लोककारणम्| अहं हि तत् करिष्यामि परं पुरुषकारतः || दैवं तु न मया शक्यं कर्म कर्तुं कथंचन ||'.

When *Yudhishthira* receives a portion of the kingdom, *Krishna* meets them again offering his help in establishing their capital. He accompanies *Arjuna* in clearing the *Khandava* forest, populated by non-*Arya* communities with the help of the arms and armaments obtained from *Indra* and *Agni*. After the capital is established *Krishna* prevails upon *Yudhishthira* to perform *Rajasuya* sacrifice. He accompanies *Arjuna* and *Bhima* to *Jarasandha* and eliminates the possible opposition by getting him killed by *Bhima* and gets released many rulers kept in captivity, placing *Jarasandha's* son *Sahadvea* on the vacant throne. When during the *Rajasuya* sacrifice, *Shishupala* heaping unspeakable insults objects *Krishna* being offered the sacrificial oblation charging that he is not a *kshatriya* but a cowherd, not a ruler but son of *Kamsa's* servant, *Krishna* kills him.

When *Yudhishthira* is banished from *Hastinapur* after he looses the game of dice forced on him by revengeful *Duryodhana*, *Krishna* meets the *Pandavas* during their exile but strangely expresses his ignorance about the game being played, which otherwise he would have prevented. He assures them without any hesitation vengeance for their humiliation and sufferings, making *Duryodhana* and his families suffer likewise. After they return from their fourteen years exile, he tries to install *Pandavas* in their kingdom. But seeing *Kauravas* opposition to the share being given to them, *Krishna* intervenes for conciliation between the warring cousins since he has great respect for *Kuru* family. But though he speaks that both *Kauravas* and *Pandavas* were equal to him, his fondness and preference for *Pandavas* was evident for all, seeing him not hesitate to speak harsh words to *Kauravas*. His affection for *Arjuna* was as strong as was his dislike for *Duryodhana*, which was not lost even on *Duryodhana* who said, 'आत्मा हि कृष्णः पार्थस्य कृष्णस्यात्मा धनंजयः || यद्ब्रूयादर्जुनः कृष्णं सर्वं कुर्यादसंशयम्| कृष्णो धनंजयस्यार्थे स्वर्गलोकमपि त्यजेत्|| तथैव पार्थः कृष्णार्थे प्राणानपि परित्यज्येत्|', *Karna* who vied to equal *Arjuna* in competence supporting his view, 'वसूनि विविधान्भोगान्राज्यमेव च केवलम्| ना त्याज्यमस्ति कृष्णस्य पाण्डवार्थे कथंचन ||'.

When *Krishna* comes to *Hastinapura* for negotiations, *Dhritarashtra* expecting favourable treatment for his sons desires to honour him with gifts and solicitations. But *Duryodhana* knowing *Krishna's* fondness for *Pandavas*, is not keen to offer any honours to him saying that though *Krishna* is respected in the three worlds as a great person showing excessive respect may lead him to think them to be weak. *Krishna* on the other hand as a statesman and unwavering negotiator uses persuasion, moderation and fair play, even berating *Dhritarashtra* for pampering his sons and saying that if *Duryodhana* does not agree for a negotiated settlement *Kuru* family will be destroyed. Even when trying every means to bring settlement he does not overlook cautioning *Yudhishthira* not to treat

Kauravas leniently since they are sure to deny them their share. He would not hesitate to use threats and not hesitate to create dissentions among *Kauravas,* luring *Karna* as the eldest son of *Kunti* with kingdom, advising him to forsake *Duryodhana.*

Once the war becomes reality, *Krishna* comes in his mettle, displaying political pragmatism as uncompromising sagacity as statesman, skilled in military strategy as an able warrior. Unlike what one accepts from god as kind and compassionate person, he performs his actions and as uncompromising क्षत्र warrior and chastiser, not hesitate to perform even actions which may appear contrary and contradictory in accepted norms of ethical conduct and standards of morality. During entire course of the battle, *Krishna* remains not only a guide and advisor but often as instigator encouraging and assuring *Pandavas* success against all odds, even taking upon him to punish the intransient ones with ruthless and perfection which even later day *Kaultilya* would hesitate to practice telling that he has already destroyed the warriors, they being only the instruments in execution. In spite of such actions, *Bhishma, Drona* and *Vidura* exposed to the nuances of intellectual spiritualism see *divine intent and purpose* in his thoughts, speech and action, though the *Duryodhana* and his brothers, *Karna, Shakuni, Shalya, and Jayadratha* all fail to gauge his intention and moves, falling prey to his wily and deceptive delusion.

Even *Arjuna* is obscure of the divine intent and purpose which drive *Krishna* to perform his actions and in manner he does. When he fails to take decisive steps to disengage *Bhishma* from the battles *Krishna* does not even hesitate to jump down from the chariot and rush twice to kill *Bhsihma,* removing all hesitancy from *Arjuna's* mind that in war only an adversary stands in one's opposite and no one is relative, friend or a companion. Knowing that *Drona* could not be killed in any other manner, he prevails upon *Yudhishthira* to utter a lie, for which one single intransigence he was destioned to see his brothers and *Draupadi* in agony in hell. After *Drona's* death, when *Karna* shoots *Sarpaastra* to kill *Arjuna, Krishna* presses down the land under the chariot with his foot, making it to sink and horses to kneel, thereby save *Arjuna's* neck from being severed. Seeing *Arjuna* doubt whether he should kill *Karna* or be killed, *Krishna* assures him that if he does not then he himself will kill *Karna* and *Shalya.* When *Karna* gets down the chariot to life the wheel stuck in the mire, it is again *Krishna* who provokes *Arjuna* to kill him, though such action was against all the cannons of a righteous battle.

Some times he appears responding more from his human attributes and inclinations born of nature completely oblivious to divine essence than one who has come as *divine essence* to establish righteousness. When both *Arjuna* and *Krishna* are hurt in the battle with *Kritavarma,* he encourages *Arjuna* to kill him even though he belonged to his *Bhoja* clan. *Shrutayu* disables them both and *Ambashta* stuns him with his powerful mace. When *Arjuna* tells him that *Drona* had given special armour to *Duryodhana* which protects him from his *Arjuna's* arrows, *Krishna* expresses surprise not having known about it. When once he does not see *Arjuna* amidst the shower of arrows dispatched by *Trigarta,* he becomes downcast, confused and seen perspiring - पर्मास्विदे wondering with all his human concern about *Arjuna's* whereabouts. When under *Samshaptaka's* shower of arrows they could not see each other, *Krishna* perspires. When *Anhimanyu* was killed treacherously by *Kauravas* and *Arjuna* and *Krishna* were returning to the camps, *Arjuna* expresses concern fearing great calamity could have fallen, *Krishna* assures him that nothing ill will has happened to his brothers and companions and some thing else might have happened, strangely unaware that at that very moment *Abhimanyu* was dead on the battle field. In another instance, when he sees *Kauravas* who were pursuing *Yudhishthira* shouting triumphant cries, he feels that *Yudhishthira* might have died. We find *Anubindu* fighting for *Kauravas* injures *Krishna* on forehead with mace though it did not shake him. Similarly when fighting *Arjuna Ambashtha* surges forth and hits *Krishna* with his mace, making him perspire 'ततः पर्मिप्विदे कृष्णः खिन्नश्चार्जुनमब्रवीत्'. *Bhagadatta* the ruler of *Pragjyotisha* hurls a shower of arrows, hurting *Arjuna* and *Krishna.*

When *Duryodhana* is killed by *Bhima* in an unrighteous battle and *Balarama* objects, *Krishna* spaciously convinces him that this was due to *Kali yuga* fast casting his shadow on human affairs,

besides reminding him that *Pandavas* were their natural friends being their aunt's sons, *Kauravas* having heaped untold sufferings on them. After the war was won and *Kauaravas* completely annihilated *Pandavas* acknowledge his help. But being hesitant to face the grieving *Dhritarashtra* and *Gandhari* he accompanies them to *Hastinapur*. He succeeds in pacifying them but could not save himself from *Gandhari* curse that he too would face the prospect of his *Vrishni-Yadava and Andhakas* being destroyed even as *Kauravas*. *Krishna* remains quiet and accepts her curse as *divine will* without any protest. He accepts with detached mind and unerring and prophetic eye the deception played on the sages and the consequential destruction of *Vrishni-Yadava-Andhakas* as *Gandhari's* curse bearing fruit even becoming the instrument of destruction of the remaining members. Then in a great sense of despondency he keeps *Dvaraka* and the inhabitants under *Babhru's* care till *Arjuna* comes to take them to *Hastinaapur.* All the while he alone remains calm and composed when all around people panicked, being confused and confounded with the manner *Time* was taking its course. He seized control of the situation, boldly and wisely as a great human being and scarcely as divinity, concealing his real essence, not being equipped to see his supreme *essence*, - 'त्रिभिर्गुणमयैर्भावैरेभिः सर्वमिदं जगत्| मोहितं नाभिजानाति मामेभ्यः परमव्ययम्||' responded and performed actions as one influenced by three-fold attributes of nature as any other human being would do.

In his temporal gross *Krishna-form* he is generally not to be seen in any manner than any normal human of his times would act, showing in his childhood all the childish pranks, in his adolescence the maturity beyond his age, in his youth all his dalliance all described more lyrically that it may have been necessary which, though aroused personal emotive responses among the devoted, tended to create more misconception among the skeptics and cynics, making difficult for both to reconcile the temporal with the spiritual. *Krishna's* true nature and character in temporal context comes vividly when once in a conversation with *Narada*, he opens his heart speaking like one friend to another, narrating his misfortunes in life as a human being, which would not appear stranger than when one observes sons and family members under the shadow if illustrious fathers taking advantage to eek out livelihood and pleasures in the world. Instead of taking inspiration of their life they seek to take material advantage. *Krishna* echoes the woes of such parents when he says that while people consider him as leader of *Andhakas* and *Vrishnis*, they themselves treat him more as their servant than their guide and leader. He is obliged to listen to their gossip. His heart smolders within, seeing his brother *Sankarashana* for his softness though known for his courage, bravery and prosperous kingdom. His son *Pradyumna* is arrogant of his beauty. *Andhakas* and *Vrishins* are strong and powerful but their thirst for quarrels is indeed uncontrollable. For their friends and companions nothing impossible and for those opposing them nothing is possible. He does not was any one side to succeed at the expense of the other subjugated, like the mother of two sons who gamble in between. Therefore, he seeks *Narada's* advice what he should do in such circumstances.

When he gives the final blow destroying the dross from his tribes, he comes out not only as the moral force but also as the comprehensive *divine Absolute Time,* taking its inevitable course as one grown mature for disciplining life, blending and arranging the primordial worlds in harmonious and balanced existence. *Bahagavat Purana* says that *Krishna* relieved the worlds by destroying the evil kings on sides of both *Kauravas* and *Pandavas*, and then takes upon himself to destroy his own tribes since they have become arrogant and bold being unconquerable by his support : 'मन्येऽवनेर्ननु गतोऽप्यगतं हि भारं यद्यादवं कुलमहो अविषह्यमास्ते ||'. Then making *Brahmins'* curse a mere excuse and pretext, he makes them destroy each other even as a bamboo grove becomes completely destroyed with friction of the bamboos and returns to his own dwelling place 'अन्तःकलिं यदुकुलस्य विधाय वेणुस्तम्बस्य वह्निमिव शान्तिमुपैमि धाम ||'. *Bhagavata Purana* says significantly that *Krishna* did not allow the *Brahmins'* curse on *Yadavas* becoming ineffectual since he himself was the destroyer like Time 'भगवाञ्ज्ञातसर्वार्थ ईश्वरोऽपि तदन्यथा | कर्तुं नैच्छद्विप्रशापं कालरूप्यन्वमोदत ||'.

Krishna having fulfilled his mission for which he had taken descent had no reason to stay any longer in his human form. He goes in the yogic state withdrawing his senses from the different parts of his body and making his mind still and intellect not even stirring reaching the equanimous state of being. Seeing his motionless feet an arrow shot by the hunter at *Krishna* which puts end to his gross human form. Discarding the mortal coil, his *divine essence* reaches his supremely heavenly abode. His death came in such a manner, which may not befit a great *Kshatriya*, a great human being, one whom people looked upon as God but it certainly proves that once the *essence* leaves the gross body all that needs for the *essence* to do is return to the quarters form where it was sourced.

Yudhishthira expresses his agony and the ways in which *divine will* obscures the expectations of human beings saying becoming inconsolable even as *Satyaki* and his brothers console him, 'A*las! Having vanquished the foes we ourselves have been vanquished by them in the end. The course of events is difficult to be understood even by men of wisdom, the vanquished have become victorious and the victorious have been vanquished. Having vanquished all elders, relatives, friends, we are ourselves stand vanquished. Misery appears like prosperity and prosperity like misery. . . In life there is no greater cause for death than heedlessness . . A heedless person can never acquire knowledge, asceticism, prosperity, or great renown*'. *Vyasa* too wonders when thousands of mothers and fathers, and hundreds of sons and their wives experience the cycle of existence only to depart from this world, thousands of stages similarly pass affecting the ordinary people day after day, why do they not listen to him and follow धर्म when he cries with his uplifted arms that enterprise (अर्थ) and desire (काम) come from Righteousness (धर्म) and follow धर्म ?

Abhinavagupta (eleventh century) in his commentary on *Anandvardhana's Dhvanyaloka* points out that Death is the culmination revealing in life everything other than the *Blessed One* is ephemeral. Therefore, when one studies *Mahabharata* as a scripture, it becomes well established that *Moksha* alone is intended as the highest goal whereas seen as poetical expression it comes to characterized by *shantarasa* and established that happiness triumphs with destruction of desire - 'तदेवमनुक्रमणिनिर्दिष्टेन वाक्येन भगवद्व्यतिरेकिणः सर्वस्यान्यस्यानित्यतां प्रकाशयता मोक्षलक्षणः एवैकः परः पुरुषार्थः शास्त्रनये काव्यनये च तृष्णाक्षयसुखपरिपोषलक्षणः शान्तो रसः महाभारतस्याङ्गित्वेन विवक्षित इति सुप्रतिपादितम् ||'. Further the internecine destruction of *Vrishnis, Pandavas'* final journey experiencing unmerited suffering, *Krishna's* death in the hands of a hunter - all these show that in every one's end comes with inbuilt tragedy. Although essence of *Dharma, Artha and Kama* can be achieved in other manner also, the fact that they too ultimately come to their tragic end seems to establish the importance of *Moksha* in all phases of life 'वृष्णिनां परस्परक्षयः पाण्डवानपि महापथक्लेशेनानुचिता विपत्तिः, कृष्णस्यापि व्याधिद्ध्वंसइति सर्वस्यापि विरसमेवावसानमिति . . . यद्यपि धर्मार्थकामानां सर्वस्वं नादृइतरिति यदन्यत्र न विद्यते, तथापि पर्यन्तविरसत्वमत्रैवावलेक्यताम्| मोक्षे तु यद्रूप तस्य सारतात्रैव विचार्यतामिति ||.

In अधिदैविक, (luminous) stage *Krishna* is presented as the immutable, अक्षर (*supra-cosmic*) *subtle divine essence* eternal unmanifest, अव्यक्तोऽव्यक्तात्सनातनः which being superior does not perish when the known क्षर (*cosmic*) manifest world of *gross forms* perishes 'तस्मात्तु भावोऽन्योऽव्यक्तोऽव्यक्तात्सनातनः | यः स सर्वेषु भूतेषु नश्यत्सु न विनश्यति ||. It is secondary and intermediate state used as transitional medium to transcend from the अधिभौतिक stage which he is conscious through sense influences to the अध्यात्मिक stage which is some one else's primary, substantive, self-luminous, experience of supreme *Brahman*.

Arjuna's acknowledgement of *Krishna's divine essence* as 'परं ब्रह्म परं धाम पवित्रं परमं शाश्वतम्| पुरुषं शाश्वतं दिव्यमादिदेवामजं विभुम्||' being secondary communication sourced from seers and sages - 'आहुस्त्वामृषयः सर्वे देवर्षि नारदस्तथा | असितो देवलो व्यासः स्वयं चैव ब्रवीषि मे ||' needed affirmation'वक्तुमर्हस्यशेषेण दिव्या ह्यात्मविभूतयः | याभिर्विभूतिभिर्लोकानिमांस्त्वं व्याप्य तिष्ठसि ||' from *Krishna* himself. *Krishna* as one who is enlightened of *Brahmic* effulgence the manifestation of *divine essence* replies, even as did others seers and sages, the experience being difficult to be expressed generally in words because mind and speech return without accessing the experience. Therefore, *Krishna* as one born with attributes and inclinations born of nature speaks to *Arjuna* that it is

impossible to narrate the extent of divine effulgent forms in different places, places and periods therefore declares only the prominent ones 'हन्त ते कथयिष्यामि दिव्या ह्यात्मविभुतयः | प्राधन्यतः कुरुश्रेष्ठ नास्त्यान्तो विस्तरस्य मे ||'.

This response takes one back to the times prior to *Aryas* settling in India, when *vedic* seers were aware of communities other than theirs, in different place speaking different languages and following different religions and rites according to the place of the abode - 'जनं बिभ्रति बहुधा विवाचसं नानाधर्मणं पृथिवी यथौकसम्|' (*Athervaveda*). Seers did not restrict *vedic* wisdom to *Aryas* or *Bhharatvarsha* alone but made it known to the whole world at large 'यथेमां वाचं कल्याणीं आवदानि जनेभ्यः | ब्रह्मराजन्याभ्यां शूद्राय चार्याय च स्वाय चारणाय च ||' even as they kept their minds open to receive the Wisdom from all sides 'आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः |'. They observed that all living creatures part and keep asunder, though they bear the mighty god within their *self*, they are not confused. Since one common is the Lord of what is constant and one what is moving that walks, that flies this multitude of creation. I ponder over the ancient person and find kinship with the mighty Lord our father, singing whose praises the divinities stand duly around on the spacious and expansive pathway - 'विश्वेदेते जनिमा सं विविक्तो महो देवान्बिभ्रती न व्यथेते | एजद्ध्रुवं पत्यते विश्वमेकं चरत्पतत्रि विषुणं वि जातम्|| सना पुराणमध्येम्यारान्महः पितुर्जनितुर्जामि तन्नः | देवासो यत्र पनितार एवैरुरौ पथि व्युते तस्थुरन्तः ||'. Therefore the eternal quest of human being is centered around the words in *Pavamana* hymn 'असतो मा सद्गमय, तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय, मृत्योर्मामृतं गमय |'. They desired that all beings should look upon them with friendly eye even as would look on all beings with friendly eye, therefore they prayed that all may look on each other with friendly eye 'मित्रस्य मा चक्षुषा सर्वाणि भूतानि समीक्षन्ताम्| मित्रस्याहं चक्षुषा सर्वाणि भूतानि समीक्षे | मित्रस्य चक्षुषा समीक्षामहे ||' (*Yajurveda*). *Plato* said in *Timaeus, 'To find the Father and the Maker of this universe is a hard task; and when you have found him, it is impossible to speak of him before all people'.*

According to *Dr. Sukhtankar, Mahabharata* was appropriated by the *Bhrigus* with the idea of developing in to a vehicle of popular instruction and edification combined with entertainment. In that attempt apart from *Vishnuism* being made popular, many deities, legends, symbols and cults came to be included along with serpent worship, sorcery, magic formulas owing their origin to regions earlier occupied by *Aryas* outside the boundaries of *Jambudvipa* with their long association with distant regions like *Mesopotamia, Assyria and Sumer*. The advent of *Pancharatra* philosophy in India is attributed to *Lord Narayana who* is said to have instructed the same to *Narada* when he had journeyed to *Svetadvipa,* the deity reclining on the eternal waters, symbolized by the mighty serpent अनन्त eternal for the reminder of time शेष, singularly alone in योगनिद्रा, with only his शक्ति the energizing power throbbing in his heart, as the potential_till the potency becomes potential as effulgent creation. *Vak Ambrhrani* claimed as her Lord as dwelling in the ocean, therefore became traditionally *Lakshmi, Narayana's* consort, the symbol or mark of six-fold attributes ज्ञान, ऐश्वर्य, शक्ति, बल, वीर्य and तेज. In *vedic* pantheon she came to be attributed as the daughter of *Bhrigu*. *Narayana* appears in *Shatapath Brahmana* as one who performed dscrifices for five nights, therefore *Pancharatra*, later becoming associated with *Vedic Purusha* making him an *integral part of Vedic Vishnuism,* worshippers of *Narayan-Vishnu-Vasudeva* being referred as *Satvatas*, *Bhagavatas*, *Pancharatras* and *Ekantins*.

A.N. Whitehead spoke of the primary role of philosophy as '*elucidation of one's integral experience*'. But scriptures rarely reach the permanency behind the flux and fluctuation of names and forms, signs and symbols which they use, though every effort is made to tear the thin veil that separates the spiritual from the temporal. Therefore, while *Krishna* alone is accepted as the supreme Lord of the Universe many other effulgent *divine forms* also came to be accepted his *forms* among different people, places and periods. Human being is constrained to respond and accept as relational symbols only those with which he is already aware having experienced or known and stored in mind as empirical experiences. When *Arjuna* being impressed by *Krishna's* communication and by earlier statements of seers like *Narada*, *Asita*, *Devala*, *Vyasa* and others and which even *Krishna* himself has reiterated, asked *Krishna* to narrate his divine manifestations, without exception whereby pervading these worlds

you abide 'आहुस्त्वामृषयः सर्वे देवर्षिर्नारदस्तथा | असितो देवलो व्यासः स्वयं चैव ब्रवीषि मे ||...वक्तुमर्हस्यशेषेण दिव्या ह्यात्मविभूतयः | याभिर्वि भूतिभिर्लोकानिमांस्त्वं व्याप्य तिष्ठसि || कथं विद्यामहं योगिंस्त्वां सदा परिचिन्तयन्| केषु केषु च भावेषु चिन्त्योऽसि भगवन्मया || विस्तरेणात्मनो योगं विभूतिं च जनार्द न | भूयः कथय तृप्तिर्हि श्रृण्वतो नास्ति मेऽमृतम्||', *Krishna* refers only those *forms*, which *Arjuna* was traditionally aware through history, culture and religious practices. Therefore though all forms are important *Krishna-form* is supremely important because in that *form* alone *the Prime Existence* becomes effulgent wholly, completely and in entirety , 'अवतारा असंख्येया हरेः सत्त्वनिधेर्द्विजाः | यथाविदासिनः कुल्याः सरसः स्युः सहस्रशः || ऋषयो मनवो देवा मनुपुत्रा महौजसः | कलाः सर्वे हरेरेव सप्रजापतयस्तथा ||, beginning with *Vishnu* as person in history 'एतां पुरा विष्णुरिव हत्वा दैतेयदानवम्| प्रयच्छ मेदिनीं राज्ञा शक्रायैव हरिर्यथा ||' to many other divine forms whether animate or inanimate, men or animals, with one qualification that even those who worship other godly forms finally end up reaching him alone as *Brahman* 'येऽप्यन्यदेवता भक्ता यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विता | तेऽपि मामेव कौन्तेय यजन्त्यविधिपूर्वकम्||'.

अधिदैविक stage is that where one becomes consciously aware of the various *forms* in which the *divine essence* dwells as the intermediate steps, relating that experience to the *divine essence* which dwells in all *forms* visible to human sight. This is the step from where one takes leap to the *formless* निराकार *form* of the *divine essence*, as something revealed, some glimpsed, something seen through mist as a *Tao* teacher would speak, '*The Tao is something blurred and indistinct. How indistinct ! How blurred ! Yet within it are images . . . things . . . mental power. Because this power is the most true within it there is confidence*'. He would wonder at the vibrant sight with mystery and stupefaction, in every variegated forms and shapes, terrestrial and transcendent, reflecting as some thing known, as something represented as the original, without obscurity and illusion, accepting no divisions or contradictions but accepting and acknowledging every state of creation as effulgence, concealed with gross or empirical sheaths from human vision, 'समं सर्वेषु भूतेषु तिष्ठन्तं परमेश्वरम्| विनश्यत्स्वविनश्यन्तं यः पश्यति स पश्यति || समं पश्यन्हि सर्वत्र समवस्थितमीश्वरम्| न हिनस्त्यात्मनात्मानं ततो याति परां गतीम्||'.

When *Arjuna* asks *Krishna* to show him his *formless divine resplendent form* - रूपमैश्वरम्, if it is possible 'द्रष्टुमिच्छामि ते रूपमैश्वरं पुरुषोत्तम || मन्यसे यदि तच्छक्यं मया द्रष्टुमिति प्रभो |', *Krishna* informs him that it is not possible for him to see the same by his human eyes and, therefore, provides him spiritual vision. But strangely that did not help him. He was frightened but not enlightened by the comprehensive resplendence. For when रूपमैश्वरम्blazed as if thousand suns have all appeared at the same moment in time in the sky, *Arjuna* becomes stuck with amazement, his hair standing on end, bowing his head down with hands clasped in supplication '...विस्मयाविष्टो हृष्टरोमा धनञ्जयः | प्रणम्य शिरसा देवं कृताञ्जलिर||'. Neither understanding nor any enlightenment dawned on him when he declared that he is *Time* 'कालोऽस्मि लोकक्षयकृत्प्रवृद्धो लोकान्समाहर्तुमिह प्रवृत्तः ||'. He expressed wonder and astonishment seeing the form as अद्भुतदर्शनम्, 'सर्वतोऽनन्तरूपम्| नान्तं न मध्यं न पुनस्तवादिं |', सर्वाश्चर्यमयं and falling at his feet offering him repeated obeisance with trembling voice, 'नमस्कृत्वा भूय एवाह कृष्णं सगद्गदं भीत भीतः प्रणम्य ||…'. Instead he asked him to show his original form endowed with diadem in his four arms 'अदृष्टपूर्वं हृषितोऽस्मि दृष्ट्वा भयेन च प्रव्यथितं मनो मे | तदेव मे दर्शय देव रूपं प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास ||'. It is only when he sees him in his human form that *Arjuna* becomes collected in wits and restored his normal nature 'दृष्ट्वेदं मानुषं रूपं तव सौम्यं जनार्दन | इदानीमस्मि संवृत्तः सचेताः प्रकृतिं गतः ||'.

अध्यात्म is made up of अधि to mean with reference to, concerning or in the subject of आत्मा. Therefore अध्यात्म is concerned with individual *self* in relation to the universal *Self* and universal *Self* with reference to or concerning with the individual *self*. *Krishna* says that individual *self* is fragment of his universal *Self*, having become eternal has drawn to itself the energetic *Prakriti* - senses of which the mind is the sixth, 'ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः | मनः षष्ठानीन्द्रियाणि प्रकृतिस्थानि कर्षति ||'. It is the universal *Self* which breathes in when breathing in, which breathes out when breathing out, which breathes about when breathing about, which breathes up when breathing up is the *Self* which is in all things. The imperishable *Self* is unseen but is the seer, unheard but the hearer, unthinkable but the thinker, unknowable but the knower. By this imperishable *Self* is all space woven like warp and woof. It is the *Self* that which is ear of the ear, mind of the mind, breath of the breath, eye of the eye. There the eye goes not, speech goes not,

nor the mind. Other indeed it is than the known, and also that is above the unknown. That which is not expressed through speech, not thought by mind, not seen by the eye, not heard by the ear not breathed by breath ; that one indeed is the universal *Self*, *Brahman* and not what one adores here in the world. Thus have *upansiahds* spoken variously.

The *Self* cannot be attained by instruction, or by intelligence, not through much hearing, not by one who has not deserted evil ways, who has not concentrated his mind, whose mind is not composed in mind. The *Self* is not being sought through senses, does not shine forth but can be seen by the subtle seers, through their sharp and subtle intelligence. The wise one should restrain speech in mind, mind in understanding, and understanding in *self*, *self* on the great *Self*. *Krishna* declares yoga is not for him who eats too much or abstains too much from eating, not for him who sleeps or keeps awake too much. He who puts away all desires of his mind and spirit is content in it then he is called stable in intelligence.

Kena Up. is clear about अध्यात्म being the urge of the *individual self* to move with mind remembering the *universal Self* with receptiveness, where there is mutual attraction towards each other. Object of desire is the dearest to one. Therefore, one should mediate on such desire which all seek, with austerity, self control and performance of actions. *Mundaka Up*. enjoins that having scrutinized the consequences of the performance of actions wise one should arrive at dispassion, because the outcome is not arrived from non-performance of actions. Therefore, the ascetics ascertaining well the meaning of the scriptures, purifying their natures through dispassion, dwelling in the atmosphere of wisdom, become finally one with their immortal (universal Self) and liberated. When the five senses which establish knowledge together with mind cease and intellect itself do not stir that is the highest state. When all the desires that dwell in the heart are cast away, and then does the mortal becomes immortal, the he attains *Brahman* here in this life. Thus also *upansiahds* having spoken variously.

He who has found the ancient *Path* and is wakened to the universal *Self* and has entered the perilous inaccessible place (in the body) they, verily is the maker of the worlds, the maker of every thing. His is the world, indeed he is the World. While one is here in this very body one may be aware of this, if not great will be the damage, for those who know will become immortal and other will go to great sufferings. It is only through अधिदैविक experiences that one would be able to reach the अध्यात्मिक experience. But अधिभौतिक stage is an unstable step even so is the अधिदैविक response. They are not ultimate goals but only preparatory steps. Not the sky, the vast space but the window through which one see, the thresh hold which one crosses to see the sky or the vast space. If one catches the window frame firmly or tarries on the step for too long not crossing the thresh hold, mesmerized by beauty, glory and grandeur of the window frame or of the thresh hold, then such one will be deprived of the experience of the *Bliss of Beatitude*. Austerity and effort are necessary even as perseverance and perfection. The lion can hope to become man only when man eats the lion and transforms it into his own flesh and blood. If the lion eats the man will be come lion its flesh and blood. Yet the effort is needed and necessary as a *Sufi* saint *Jalaluddin Rumi* points out :

If you are irritated by every rub,
How will your mirror be polished...
One must exist like an elephant,
So that when it sleeps by night and can dream about Hindustan
After all, the ass can not dream about Hindustan
Because the ass has never been there.
There is need for a spirit with the power of an elephant,
Able to journey in sleep to Hindustan...
Desire makes the elephant remember Hindustan
Nostalgia by night gives his recollection a form,

Do not give up hope: become an elephant,
Or if not quite that, then seek for transformation...'.

For it is truly said :

Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born,
If he's not born in thee, thy soul is still forlorn.
The Cross on Golgotha will never save thy soul,
The Cross in thine own heart alone can make thee whole .

अध्यात्मिक stage is spoken as one relating to the unmanifest immutable stage, as the supreme aspiration and eminence, where one experiences *divine essence* as 'विज्ञानमयः प्राणेषु हृद्यन्तर्ज्योतिः पुरुषः'. In that stage one expresses his responses to his spiritual experiences by using empirical symbols to express spiritual experiences wandering between the stages of *obscurity* and *Knowledge* अधिभौतिक state and faint glimpse of the अधिदैविक state of enlightenment 'स समानः सन्नुभौ लोकावनुसंचरति ध्यायतीव लेलायतीव' during balance period of their lives fulfilling the responsibility cast on them by earlier *Karmas.*

On the अध्यात्मिक level, *Krishna* ceases to be human being, one born to *Devaki* as child or as the disciple whom *Ghora Angiras* initiated in the three foundational principles that the *self* within is indestructible, unshakable and the very essence of life - 'एतत् त्रयं प्रतिपद्येत अक्षितमसि अच्युतमसि प्राणसंशितमसीति |'. He is neither the wise statesman with shrewd sagacity and political pragmatism nor the compassionate of the weak and protector of the need, with military wisdom, neither a man of wisdom nor a philosopher, verily a great visionary, prophet and a great human being acquiring undisputed renown in the comity of nations. *Krishna's* life and actions, therefore, require detailed receptivity, reflection and meditation with no portions highlighted nor other portions left out to be told, not only from emotional and devotional point of view but also from intellectual and metaphysical point of view, how such resplendent personality, who exhibited exemplary temporal life and influence in the society came to be accepted as spiritually supreme *divine essence.* It is suffice to say that every manifestation having form and attributes and inclinations born of nature, has within itself the *divine essence* which one may or may not be consciously aware of. This awareness comes with the gradual evolution of the consciousness, beginning with perhaps complete unawareness and with gradual enfoldment of that conscious in varying degrees and intensity, in lesser extent in some and in larger in others, some having realized their role and purpose while others still oblivious, but evidencing and acknowledging the existence of that divine resplendence as *Krishna.*

Therefore, on the अध्यात्मिक level, *Krishna* becomes the one born with four arms wielding conch, mace, discus, becomes the one who showed his foster mother *Yashoda* the moving and stationary worlds, space and the quarters, earth with the mountains, oceans, stars and the heavens, water, fire and the air, sky, the wonderful worlds consisting of animate and inanimate organism along with *Time*, and deities presiding over sense organs, mind, *I*-sense and the three attributes as well, lives living in *Vraja* including herself in that little mouth of his, becomes the one who showed *Kauravas* who dared to take him a prisoner, his still more powerful *universal form* flashing like lightening, with luminous gods of the size of thumb, with *Brahma* stationed on his forehead, *Rudra* on his chest, many gods becoming effulgent from different parts of his body, *Balarama* on his shoulder and *Arjuna* with his weapons, flames flowing from his eyes, ears, nose and pores of his body and Sun rays shining brilliant, cymbals and conches, drums and bugles blaring loud and clear, becomes the one who showed to *Arjuna,* रूपमैश्वरम hundred-fold, thousand-fold divine, various in kind, shape and colours, wonderful, resplendent, boundless, facing all the quarters, which even if the light of thousand Suns were to blaze forth all at one time in the sky and becomes the one finally displayed the रूपमैश्वरम् to *Uttanka Bhargava.*

On the अध्यात्मिक level, *Krishna* ceases to be the *divine essence* descending in luminous *divine forms* like *Indra, Agni, Vayu, Varuna, Surya*, and host of other deities presiding over the elements and the quarters, or as human forms like *Sanatkumaras, Narada, Nara and Narayana, Kapila, Dattatreya, Svayambhuva Manu, Rishabha, Prithu, Dhanvantari, Parashurama, Vyasa, Vamana, Parashurama, Dasharathi Rama and Krishna* or as non-human forms like *fish, Tortoise, Boar and Man-Lion* suggesting that *divine essence* descends assuming many forms as seers, sages, *Manus*, gods, and *Prajapatis*, in whom undoubted presence of luminous ray was observed - 'एतन्नानावनागणां निधानं बीजमव्ययम्| यस्यांशेन सृज्यन्ते देवतर्यङ्नग्दयः ||' as chastiser of the cruel and unrighteous ones. *Bhagavat Purana* in particular suggests that *divine descents* for the protection of the worlds and destruction of those inimical, whether as human being, animal, seer, god, fish or righteousness were all visible in the three earlier *yugas*, except in *Kali yuga* where he is not visible being concealed 'इत्थं नृतिर्यगृषिदेवझषावतानैर्लोकान्विभावयसि हंसि जगत्प्रतीपान्| धर्मं महापुरुष पासि युगनुवृत्तं छन्नः कलौ यदभवस्त्रियुगोऽथ स त्वम्||' but in whichever form, whether high or low, possessing whichever distinctive attribute produces or transforms any thing, with whichever intent, with whichever instrument, from whichever source and in whichever manner or whatever he produces or transforms, whatever is produced and by whomsoever prompted, all that is you, yourself - 'यस्मिन्यतो यर्हि येन च यस्य यस्मादयस्मै यथा यदुत यस्त्वपरः परो वा | भवः करोति विकरोति पृथक्स्वभावः सञ्चोदितस्दखिलं भवतः स्वरूपम्||'. *Bhagavat Purana* was further particular to suggest that while in all other effulgence's *divine essence* exists as partial manifestation, it was in *Krishna* that *divine essence* became resplendent completely, wholly and in entirety 'ऋषयो मनवो देवा मनुपुत्रा महौजसः | कलाः सर्वे हरेरेव सप्रजापातायस्तथा || एते चांशकलाः पुंसः कृष्णस्तु भगवान्स्वयम्|' for maintaining the world order - '... असतां निग्रहार्थाय धर्मसंरक्षणाय च | अवतीर्णो मनुष्याणामजायत यदुक्षये || स एवं भगवान् विष्णुः कृष्णेति परिकीर्त्यते | अनाद्यमजन्तं देवं प्रभुं लोकनमस्कृतं ||'.

The various accounts in *Mahabharata* or *puranas* where *Krishna's* displays his *divine essence* are the illusory forms by which he comes to be known 'रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बभूव तदस्य रूपं प्रतिचक्षणाय | इन्द्रो मायाभिः पुरुरूप ईयते युक्ता ह्यस्य हरयः शता दश ||'. *Shankara* explains the many forms were for the sake of making him known, because only when *essence* manifests in *forms* the transcendental *Pure Intelligence* becomes known. The Lord's माया the formative power which creates diverse impressions or false identification, do not reveal the *essence* in *forms*, Truth being perceived as manifold, though singularly one *Pure Intelligence* - 'किमर्थं पुनः प्रतिरूपमागमनं तस्येच्युते | तदास्यात्मनो रूपं प्रतिचक्षणाय प्रतिख्यापनाय | यदि हि नामरूपे न व्याक्रीयते तदा अस्यात्मनो निरुपाधिकं रूपं प्रज्ञानघनाख्यं न प्रतिख्यायेत | यदा पुनः कार्यकरणात्मना नामरूपे व्याकृते बवतः | तदास्य रूपं प्रतिख्यायेत इन्द्रः परमेश्वरो मायाभिः प्रज्ञाभिः नामरूपभृतकृतमिथ्याभिमानैर्वा न तु परमार्थतः, पुरुरूपो बहुरूप ईयते गम्यते, एकरूप एव प्रज्ञानघनः सन्नविद्याप्रज्ञाभिः ||'. The enlightened experience of *divine descent* comes in silent moments, his feet treading silent steps, all at once and all too sudden, dramatically described as flash of lightening and roll of thunder to announce its unexpected arrival. In truth divine presence is experienced by every one in every moment of life, but only seers with sensitive receptivity recognizes its presence, uninfluenced or obscured by thoughts of others traditionally handed over as well as by one's own thoughts as responded by sense influences. For such one neither the steps are unheard not their footprints unseen, seeing the *divine essence* in every things and everything rooted in divine *essence* he does not feel revulsion either from the pleasant or the painful 'यस्तु सर्वाणिभूतानि आत्मन्येवानुपश्यति | सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं ततो न विजुगुप्सते ||'.

For such ones *Krishna's* steps make their vibrant and luminous presence felt in the animate and inanimate creatures, the mountains and the rivers, the trees and the flowers, even as the Sun sheds warmth, even as the clouds pour cool showers, invigorating the earth, the seeds to sprout as plants, plants to become trees and trees to produce seeds when they depart, leaving their footprints present in the thing and every where they tread, both as fragrance of flowers left behind when the flowers die or as earthquakes shaking the earths, as volcanoes spewing molten rocks, as tempests blowing across the oceans, as rains lashing out in floods, rivers inundating the banks, thus turning in motion the cycle again and again, accepting love and compassion, non-violence and mercy, no one complaining, no one demanding explanations, even as one would accept all the acts and events flowing from the divine,

luminous ordainer, guide and supervisor of ऋत, the *cosmic law* in operation wholly, completely and in entirety, unequivocally, unambiguously and undeniably. अध्यात्मिक experience is like experiencing *amalka* fruit on the palm of one's hand 'करतलामलाकवत्साक्षत्अपरोक्षीकृत्वा', experiencing the luminous Sun, the cool breeze, the changing seasons, the pouring rains, the streaming rivers, birds and the animals, trees and the flowers, wooded forests and the magnificent mountains all spread around vibrant, vivifying and variegated nature both terrestrial and transcendent, reflecting everything as the original, without obscurity and illusion, accepting no divisions or contradictions but accepting and acknowledging every state of creation as effulgence, concealed with gross or empirical sheaths from human vision.

Chandhogya Up. describes that stage as one becoming serene, rising from one's body and reaching the supreme light remaining established in its own true nature. *This is the Self, the immortal, beyond all fear, Brahman, the Prime Existence* 'अथ य एव मम्प्रमादोऽस्माच्छगीगत्समुत्थाय परं ज्योतिरूपमम्पद्य एष आत्मेति होवाचैतदमृतमभयमेतद्ब्रह्मेति तस्य ह वा एय्स्य ब्रह्मणो नाम मत्येति ||'. *Brihad Aranyak Up* says that such one becomes transparent like water, one without duality. *This is the world of Brahman; this is his highest goal, highest reward, and highest objective, highest bliss.* On particle of this very bliss others creatures live 'सलिल एको द्रष्टद्वैतो भवति, एष ब्रह्मलोकः सम्राडिति हैनमनुशशास याज्ञवल्क्यः, एपास्य परमां गतिः, एषास्य परमा संपत्, एषोऽस्य परमो लोकः, एषोऽस्य परम आनन्दः; एतस्यैवानन्दस्यान्तानि भूतानि मात्रामुपजीवन्ति ||'. *Narada* says when one becomes enlightened of *Krishna* then he becomes excited, becomes stunned, becomes self satisfied 'यज्ज्ञात्वा मत्तो भवति स्तब्धो भवति आत्मारामो भवति |'. He sees him alone, hears him alone, speaks of him alone and thinks of him alone 'तत्प्राप्य यदेवावलोकयति तदपव श्रुणोति भाषयाति तदपव चिन्तयति |'.

For the enlightened ones the *forms* do not stand for *Krishna* even as a container does stand for the contained. *Krishna* is far greater and comprehensive than what forms would suggest. It is wonderful and resplendent *divine form*, multi-dimensional, all-pervading and boundless. *Arjuna* saw it flashing with such intensity that even if thousands of Suns were to blaze forth all at once in the sky, they might conceivably be ressemble the splendour of the great exalted Being even as in ancient days *Moses* saw an angel appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of the bush which burned but was not consunmed. And the God called unto him out of the midst of bush, *Moses, Moses.*

In moderne times Blaize Pascal (17th century) experienced God it was again as '*Fire, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob. Not the God of the philosophers and of the learned.Certitude. Joy. Certitude. Emotion, Sight. Joy. Forgetfulness of the world and of all outside God. The world hath not known Thee, but I have known Thee.Joy! Joy! Joy! Tears of Joy ! My God, wilt thou leave me? Let me not be separated from Thee for ever*'. For *Ramana Maharshi, Arunachala* mountain appeard as the centre of energy infusing every corner in the world, '*the landscape in front of me disappeared as a bright white curtain, drawn across my vision and shut it out . . Then the bright white curtain completely shut off my vision, my head was swimming and my circulation and breathing stopped . . It was the regular death hue and it got darker and darker. . The body, left without circulation or respiration, still maintained that position . . Then a shock passed suddenly through the body . . and the body perspired from every pores. The colour of life reappeared on the skin. I then opened my eyes and got up and said 'Let us go'.*

Arjuna's experience of *Krishna's* resplendence was such which even the luminous gods desire to see - 'सुदुर्दशमिदं रूपं दृष्टवानसि यन्मम | देवा अप्यस्य रूपस्य नित्यं दर्शान काङ्क्षिणः ||', *Krishna* coming as *Time* the mature discipliner of worlds all being destroyed, the animate and inanimate being mere instruments in dispensation निमित्तमात्र. But Arjuna reacted as an ordinary human being, as one nurtured in *vedic* symbolism, using the terminology as he was accustomed. None the less he was worried 'सगदागदं भीतभीतः' and confounded becoming overwhelmed by the spectacle, bewildered, 'अदृष्तरूपं हृषितोऽस्मि दृष्टवा भयेन च पव्यथितं मनो मे |' and frightened bowing him again and again, regretting whatever was spoken by him in rashness unaware of his greatness and treating him as companion referring him, हे कृष्ण हे यादव हे सखे. Then 'नमस्कृत्या भूय एवाह कृष्णं ... || he requests *Krishna* to show his pleasing form 'तदेव मे दर्शय देव रूपं प्रसदि देवेश जगन्निवास || किरीटिनं गदिनं

चक्रहस्तमिच्छमि त्वां दष्टुमहं तथेव | तेनैव रूपेण चतुर्भुजेन सहस्रबाहो भव विश्वमूर्ते ||'. It is only when *Krishna* reverts to his human form Arjuna feels collected in mind 'दृष्टमेदं मानुषं रूपं तव सौम्यं जनार्दन | इदानीमस्मि संवृत्तः सचेताः प्रकृतिं गतः ||'.

What the great god, *Mahadeva* spoke to *Jayadratha* about *Krishna* was on the अध्यात्मिक level, 'असतां निग्रहार्थाय धर्मसंरक्षणाय च | अवतीर्णो मनुष्याणामजायत यदुक्षये || स एवं भगवान्विष्णुः कृष्णेति परिकीर्त्यते | अनाद्यमजन्तं देवं प्रभुं लोकनमस्कृतं ||' or 'पितामहादपि वरः शाश्वतः पुरुषो हरिः | कृष्णो जाम्बूनदाभासो व्यभ्रे सूर्य इवोदिताः ||..श्रीवत्साङ्गो हृषिकेशः सर्वदैवतपूजितः ||...सुरकार्यार्थमुत्पन्नो मानुषं वपुरास्थितः | न हि देवगणाः सक्तास्त्रिविक्रमविनाकृताः ||...य एव विष्णुः सोऽनन्तो भगवान्वसुधाधरः | यो रामः स हृषिकेशो योऽच्युतः स धराधरः ||' or what *Indra* spoke to *Lomasha Rishi* that 'नरनारायणौ यौ तौ पुराणवृषिसत्तमौ | ताविमावनुजानीहि हृषिकेशधनंजयो || विख्यातौ त्रिषु लोकेषु नरानारायणावृषी | कार्यार्थमवतीर्णौ तौ पृथ्वीं पुण्यप्रतिश्रयाम्||' or what great seer *Markandeya* spoke to *Yudhishthira* that the child who reveled his identity as 'अहं नारायणो नाम शङ्खचक्रगदाधरः |' is same as *Krishna* 'यः स देवो मया दृष्टः पुरा पद्मायतेक्षणः | स एष पुरुषव्याघ्र सम्बन्धी ते जनार्दनः ||' or what *Vyasa* spoke to *Dhritarashtra* 'नरनारायणौ यौ तौ पूर्व देवै विभावसो | सम्प्राप्तौ मानुषे लोके कार्यार्थे हि दिवौकसम्|| अर्जुनं वासुदेवं च यौ तौ लोकोऽभिमन्यते | तावेतौ महिनावेहि खाण्डवस्य समीपतः ||', or even what *Krishna* himself spoke to *Arjuna* that 'नरस्त्वमसि दुर्धर्ष हरिर्नारायणो ह्यहम्| काले लोकमिमं प्राप्तौ नारनारायणावृषी ||' were all primary enlightened अध्यात्मिक experiences.

It is unlike the intermediate अधिदैविक stage stage from where *Kanva* tells *Duryodhana* that *Narada* has seen the great deeds performed by *Vishnu* and *Krishna* is no one other than *Vishnu* himself 'प्रत्यक्षदर्शी सवर्डस्य नरदोऽयं महातपाः | माहात्म्यस्य तदा विष्णोः सोऽयं चक्रगदाधरः ||' or by *Bhishma* that he was told by *Vyasa* that 'वासुदेवार्जुनौ वीरौ समवनौ महारथौ नरनारायणौ देवौ पूर्वदेवावति श्रुतिः || अजेयौ मनुषे लोके सेन्द्रैरपि सुरासुरैः | एष नारायणः कृष्णः फाल्गुनश्च नरः स्मृतः | नारायणो नरश्चैव सत्त्वमेकं द्विधा कृतम् ||' or *Sanjaya* repeating that 'अजुनो वासुदेवश्चा धन्विनौ परमार्चितौ | कामादन्यत्र सम्भूतौ सर्वभावाय सम्मितौ ||'. These are some who were fortunate to be blessed to be enlightened by *divine essence*, as were *Devaki* who was graced the moment *Krishna* was born, or *Yashoda* who was shown the universe in his mouth, as when *Bhishma, Vidura, Sanjaya* and scores of seers and sages were shown *Vishvaroop* in *Kauarava's* assembly hall, as when *Arjuna* was shown *divine resplendence* on the battle field or even when *Uttank Bhargava* was shown the *divine resplendence.*

अध्यात्मिक stage is the stage not of *Becoming* but of *Being*, where one neither sees forms nor desires any *desires*, perceptions or concepts remain unchanged, un-changing, ever evolving, singularly conscious and alive, breathing alone by *self-impulse.* That is the state he seeks to expresses his experiences using human terminology, words and symbols knowing well that he is not able to speak of the *divine essence.* It is the state which *Upanishads* visualize when saying that when all desires that dwell in one's heart are cast away then the mortal (body) becomes immortal enlightened to *Brahman* here (freed from the attachments to the body), like a serpent which having discarded its skin lies on the anthill. Then this separated and immortal life becomes *Brahman* the luminous light 'यदा सर्वे प्रमुच्यन्ते कामा येऽस्य हृदि श्रिताः | अथ मर्त्योऽमृतो भवत्यत्र ब्रह्म समश्नुत इति || यद्यथाहिनिर्ल्वयनी वल्मीके मृता पत्यस्ता शयीत, एवमेवेदं शरीरं शेते, अथायमशरीरोऽमृतः प्राणो ब्रह्मैव तेज एव;...||', *Shankara* explaining how the body which is subject to death and being born, after the sense organs are merged and body becomes dissolved in the cause the liberated one lives in the same body by giving the example of the serpent discarding its skin and yet remaining alive 'अथेतरः सर्पस्थानीयो मुक्तः सर्वात्मभूतः सर्पवत्तत्रैव वर्तमानोऽप्यशरीर एव न पूर्ववत्पुनः सशरीरो भवति | कामकर्मप्रयुक्तशरीरातमभावेन हि पूर्वं सशरीरो मर्त्यश्च | तद्वियोगादथेदानीमशरीरोऽत एव अमृतः || प्राणः प्राणितीति प्राणः ||'. It is the state which *Krishna* describes as one who is enjoined in *Yoga,* is pure in soul, master of his self, conquered his senses, whose self has become the self of all, and not tainted by actions even though he perfoms actions 'योगयुक्तो विशुद्धात्मा विजितात्मा जितेन्द्रियः | सर्वभूतात्मभूतात्मा कुर्वन्नपि न लिप्यते ||'.

It is not the state which the *upanishds* refer as when a lump of salt that is throwm in waer becomes dissolved in water andthere would not be any of it to seize forth as it were and whatever one takes us salt indeed 'स यथा सैन्धवखिल्य उदके प्रास्त उदकमेवानुलीयेत न हास्योद्ग्रहणायेव स्यात्| यतो यतस्त्वाददीत लवणमेवैवं ....||'. It is not the state which *Krishna* indicates in the very beginning as when one abandoning all desires and acts free from longing, without any *I-sense, mineness*, 'विहाय कामान्यः सर्वान्पुमांश्चरति निस्पृहः | निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ||' or the divine state having attained which one is not bewildered and abiding in that state at the end of his life he attains the bliss of *Brahman* - 'एषा ब्राह्मी स्थितिः पार्थ नैनां प्राप्य विमुह्यति | स्थित्वाऽस्यामन्तकालेऽपि ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृच्छति ||'. It is also

not the state where one is complteley void of all the empirical thoughts, ideas, concepts which state which *Gautama Buddha* allides describe as '*When sensations no longer exist, O brother, that, verily, is Bliss. . Just as the great savor has one single taste, the taste of salt, this Law and the discipline has one sensation, the sensation of liberation*'. It is athat state which *Bhagava Purana* speaks of as the one where even while established in social positions, transcend Knowledge and offrer obeisance with thought, speech and actions to *Krishna's* personality and activities, narrating his glory certainly attainhim even though unattainable in the three worlds -.SB 10.14.3, 'ज्ञाने प्रयासमुदपास्य नमन्त एव जीवन्ति सन्मुखरितां भवदीयवार्ताम्| स्थाने स्थिताः श्रुतिगतां तनुवाङ्कमनाभिर्ये प्रायशोऽजित जितोऽप्यसि तैस्त्रिलोक्याम्||'.

Mokaha derived from the root मुञ्च and generally understood as liberation, release, deliverance, and freedom from the primordial world to an eternal world is in fact the deliverance of *the immortal self*, the *essence* from the constraints of the gross body, the *form*. In *Vivekachudamani Shankara* says that bondage and deliverance are not factual but concepts which manifest primarily from modification of the mind 'मायाक्लृप्तौ बन्धमोक्षौ न स्तः स्वात्मनि वस्तुतः |'. *Sri Madhva* defines *Nirvana* in the same sense as '*being without body*'; काय, वाण and शरीर used as identical words. The word is also for '*one not having any sense organs*' or for '*one not influenced by senses*'. The *Rigvedic* महामृत्युंजय hymn 'त्र्यम्बकं यजामहे सुगन्धीं पुष्टिवर्धनम्| उर्वारुकमिव बन्धनान्मृत्योर्मुक्षीय मामृतात्||', where the seeker prays the three-eyed divinity, who is aware of the past, present and future, the auspicious and enhancer of energy for deliverance like cucumber from the bondage of the *mortal* gross *form* of the body and not of the *immortal essence*, the *Brahman*. Mortal body is nothing but aggregation of elements earth, water, fire, air, space and sensory influences of the mind, intelligence and self-sense. But the immortal *self* is the one who breathes in with breathing, who breathes out with breathing, who breathes about with breathing, who breathes up with breathing, the one never seen but is the seer, never heard but is the hearer, never thought but the thinker, never is known but the knower, he is the self, the inner controller, the immortal and all else is mortal.

अध्यात्मिक state is not the state of final deliverance, where the enlightened one becomes wholly, completely and in entirety from the primordial life, being obliged to live rest of their life in the empirical *gross form* the *subtle enlightened essence* was born in. जीवनमुक्ति is not same as विदेहमुक्ति. जीवनमुक्त is one who is liberated even when alive in the gross body. He is blessed one with his duties fulfilled. When the time comes to depart from his gross body, he gives up the state of जीवनमुक्त and enters the state विदेहमुक्त, liberation without the gross body with his breath stilled, as it were 'जीवनमुक्तः स विज्ञेयः स धन्यः कृतकृत्यवान्| जीवनमुक्तपदं त्यक्त्वा स्वदेहे कालसत्कृते | विशत्य देहमुक्तत्वं पवनोऽस्पन्दतामिव ||'. But liberation is not for one who is not become enlightened that '*I am Brahman*'. The अध्यात्म is the state in which one continuously and consistently sees *Vishnu's* exalted state with his extended vision 'तद्विष्णोः परमं पद सदा पश्यन्ति सूरयः दिवीव चक्षुराततम्||'. Such one's are called *Bhagavan* because they become fully conscious of the origin, dissolution, coming and going, wisdom and ignorance 'उत्पत्तिं प्रलयं चैव भूतानामगतिं गतिम्| वेत्ति विद्यामविद्यां च स वाच्यो भगवानिति ||'. Without effort, without *I-sense*, intent on meditation established in the *Supreme Self*, keen on removing all demerits, they renounce their body. Such one is called a *Paramahamsa*, yes, a *Paramahamsa* 'अप्रयत्नो निर्ममः शुक्लध्यानपरायणोऽध्यात्मनिष्ठोऽशुभकर्मनिर्मूलनापरः सन्यासेन देहत्यागं करोति | स परमहंसोनाम परमहंसनामेति ||'. *Samavartaka, Arni, Svataketu, Durvas, Rbhu, Nidagha, Jadabharta, Dattatreya, Raivataka* are some of the ancient *Paramahamsas*. In recent times *Ramakrishna* of *Dakshinesvar* and *Ramana Maharshi* of *Tiruvannamalai* were considered as *Paramahamsas*.

Bhishma was respectful to *Krishna* on his अधिभौतिक level as a great statesman and human being, on अधिदैविक level, as the ancient seer *Narayana* born in human form as informed by *Vyasa* and *Narada* and becoming privy to *Krishna's* universal resplendence in *Kaurava's* assembly hall and responding unhesitatingly as *divine redeemer*, when he took his whip to thrash him on the battle ground seeing *Arjuna* not taking decisive steps to put an end to his life, - 'एह्येहि पुण्डरीकाक्ष देवदेव नमोऽस्तु ते || मामद्य सात्वतश्रेष्ठ पातयस्व महाहवे | त्वया हि देव संग्रामे हतस्यापि ममानघ || श्रेय एव परं कृष्ण लोके भवति सर्वतः | सम्भावितोऽस्मि गोविन्द त्रैलोक्येनाद्य संयुगे || प्रहरस्व यथेष्टं वै दासोऽस्मि

नव चानघ ||'. It was only when he was on his bed of arrows, waiting to leave his mortal coils, when *Bhishma* becomes comprehensively entitled and qualified for final deliverance विदेहमुक्ति seeing *Krishna's* luminous *divine essence* as he approached him -'मर्त्संश्रितं यदाऽऽत्थ त्वं वचः पुरुषसत्तम | तेन पश्यामि ते दिव्यान्भावान्हि त्रिषु वर्त्मसु || तच्च पश्यामि गोविन्द यत्ते रूपं सनातनम्| सप्त मार्गा निरुद्धास्ते वायारमिततेजसः || दिवं ते शिरसा व्याप्तं पद्भ्यां देवी वसुन्धरा | दिशो भुजा रविश्चक्षुर्वीर्ये शक्रः प्रतिष्ठिता || अतसीपुष्पसंकाशं पीतव्वाससमुच्यतम्| वपुर्ह्यनुमिमीमस्ते मेघस्येव सविद्युतः || त्वत्प्रपन्नाय भक्ताय गतिमिष्टां जिगीषवे | यच्छ्रेयः पुण्डरीकाक्ष तद्ध्यायस्व सुरोत्तम ||'. This enlightenment enabled him to plead *Krishna* for his permission to depart from this world, 'त्रायस्व पुण्डरीकाक्ष पुरुषोत्तम नित्यशः | अनुजानीहि मां कृष्ण वैकुण्ठं पुरुषोत्तम ||..त्वां नु जानाम्यहं देवं पुराणमृषिसत्तमम्| नरेण सहितं देव वदर्यां सुचिरोषितम्||..स मां त्वमनुजानीहि कृष्ण मोक्ष्ये कलेवरम्| त्वयाहं समनुज्ञातो गच्छेयं परमाङ्गतिं ||'. *Krishna* too with supreme confidence of the *divine essence* within him delivers him from the *samsara*, permitting him to do so saying 'अनुजानामि भीष्म त्वां वसून्प्राप्नुहि पार्थिव | न तेऽस्ति वृजिनं किंचिदिहलोके महाद्युते || पितृभक्तोऽसि वशे स्थिताः भृत्य इवाननः ||'.

Every one is not great like *Bhishma,* divine essence luminously immaculate, therefore *Krishna* says that many are confused and bewildered by the diversity of his human manifestation 'अवजानन्ति मां मूढा मानुषीं तनुमाश्रितम्| परं भावमजानन्तो मम भूतमहेश्वरम्||'. Therefore, he cannot be determined as *He is such and such, and to such and such extent* not only in human forms, but also in non- human and inanimate forms. Therefore, *Krishna* is said to descend in varying concentration in all the विभूति*s* narrated to *Arjuna*, 'अहं सर्वस्य प्रभवो मत्तः सर्वं प्रवर्तते | इति मत्वा भजन्ते मां बुधा भावसमन्विताः || यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्त्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा | तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोंऽशसम्भवम्||'. Even though many accept *Krishna* as the *divine essence* descended in human form, yet they hesitate to accept him unreservedly, though agreeing to do as *Krishna* wishes and not because they are fully convinced.

Therefore, even though *Arjuna* was very close to *Krishna* as friend and relative, his response to *Krishna* was not different. He becomes despondent and obscure in mind even in his presence asking him to speak in clear words since he is his friend and disciple 'कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभावः पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसंमूढचेताः | यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम्||', His attention was not steady nor receptivity well established when *Krishna* communicates *Gita* in spite of his particular caution 'कच्चिदेतच्छ्रुतं पार्थ त्वयैकाग्रेण चेतसा | कच्चिदज्ञानसम्मोहः प्रनष्टस्ते धनञ्जय ||'. He replies as a normal human being would do that his despondency is removed, memory regained, doubts resolved and he will do as instructed 'नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा त्वत्प्रसादान्मयाच्युत | स्थितोऽस्मि गतसन्देहः करिष्ये वचनं तव ||', accepting his words as spoken a friend, advisor and guide, without speaking a word of adoration or acknowledgement as one hardly conscious of being enlightened by a benevolent teacher, compassionate guide and effective path finder. The peak of obscurity which comes over his mind because of lack of receptivity becomes apparent when he later tells him that the wisdom transmitted by *Krishna* on the battle filed is forgotten due to imperfections receptivity and requests him to repeat as though it was school lesson to be again imparted.

Knowledge by its very nature is a vehicle for deliverance over a period of repeated births and deaths. It is not a manual of instruction to be followed when in doubt and trouble. Therefore few who are wise in wisdom pick up their stride even when they fall while ignorant ones remain down where they had fallen when they fall. *Puranas* and mystical legends record many events where देव*s* असुर*s* or मानव*s* who are all *Prajapati's* progeny perform actions born with their attributes and inclinations, righteously, unrighteously or as mixture of both. When the fulfill their ordained actions righteously they rise in spiritual eminence or are punished when they fail to perform actions or the moral or ethical, righteous or rules of conduct decreed under the cosmic law. Carnal desires and amorous lives of Gods and seers are replete in *Puranas*. *Indra* would not hesitate to covet *Ahalya* wife of seer *Gautama*. Arrogance of *Viishvamitra* would make the mild mannered *Vashishtha* crawl in agony. *Durvasa* would not hesitate to denigrate followers of *Vishnu* even as *Bhrigu* would not hesitate to decide who among the gods the great one was. All these events become stuff of evidence to substantiate that ऋत and धर्म are supreme and every one, whether देव*s* असुर*s* or मानव*s* have to suffer having performed acts contrary to ऋत and धर्म even as the same *Puranas* conclude. Even those who have fallen having transgressed the *cosmic law* and fail to rise without being consciously aware of the mysterious actions of the Lord who frustrates their transgression

as act of grace which is difficult to attain for others as *Vratra* says in *Bhagavat Purana* 'ततोनुमयो भगवत्प्रसादो यो दुर्लभोऽकिञ्चनगोचरोऽन्यैः |'.

The despondency of intelligence is not restricted to humans, seers and the gods presiding over the elements alone, but also to the one of the descent as *Dasharathi Rama* when becoming obscured in mind he rejects *Sita* fearing public scandal 'जनवादभयाद्राज्ञो वभूव हृदयं द्विधा' declaring that he had done whatever was possible through human enterprise 'पौरुषाद्यदनुष्ठेयं मयैतदुपपादितम्' and to fulfill his vow and redeem honour and wipe out disrepute of his family and not for her sake 'अद्य तीर्णप्रतिज्ञोऽहं प्रभवाम्यद्य चात्मनः'. Shocked to hear his spacious advise to choose any one else 'लक्ष्मणे वाथ भरते कुरु बुद्धिं यथासुखम्|| शत्रुघ्ने वाथ सुग्रिवे राक्षसे वा विभीषणे | निवश्य मनः सीते यथा वा सुखमात्मनः ||' *Sita* protests his uncivilized vulgar words spoken like an uncivilized ordinary man, who has seen the ways of ordinary women 'पृथक्स्त्रीणां प्रचारेण जातिं त्वं पृशङ्कसे |...सह संवृद्धभावेन संसर्गेण च मानद | यदि तेऽहं न विज्ञाता हता तेनास्मि शाश्वतम्||'. With unexpected vehemence *Sita* asks him why Rama not repudiated her earlier instead of embarking on a worthless excursion, instead like a mean person succumbed to his anger 'लङ्कास्थाह त्वया राजन्किं तदा न विसर्जिता |..न वृथा ते श्रमोऽयं स्यात्संशये न्यस्य जीवितम्|...त्वया तु नृपशार्दूल रोषमेवानुवर्तता | लघुनेव मनुष्येण स्त्रीत्वमेव पुरस्कृतम्||'. When finally when he accepts *Sita* forcing her to go through the ordeal, *Rama* replies that he considers himself as a normal human being born to *Dhasharatha* and had he accepted her with proving her purity, people would have questioned his fairness 'आवश्यं चापि लोकेषु सीता पावनार्हति | दीर्घकालोषिता रावणान्तःपुरे शुभा || बालिशो बत कामात्मा रामो दशरथात्मजः | इति वक्ष्येत मां लोको जनकीमविशोध्य हि ||'. Thus it may be seen how even great people though are conscious internally are often disposed to lead their life contrary to their own essence within, fearing public censure or to be in tune with public acceptance. *Rama* was not an exception, Krishna being seen more so on his dealimgs performinmg actions as one would accept a valiant one to do.

On modern India on sees three outstanding persons who experienced spiritual enlightenment on the supreme अध्यात्मिक level and yet lived their temporal life as *paramahamsas* till the effect of their *karmas* was completely terminated in this very life. *Ramakrishna Paramahamsa* experienced enlightenment in childhood when he saw covered with rain clouds and snow-white wild cranes flying in a row against that dark background. An ecstatic feeling arose in my heart, and I lost all outward consciousness. On another occasion, '*suddenly the blessed Mother revealed herself. The buildings with their different parts, the temple, and everything vanished from my sight, leaving no trace whatsoever, and in their stead I saw a limitless, infinite, effulgent Ocean of Consciousness. As far as the eye could see, the shining billows were madly rushing at me from all sides with a terrific noise, to swallow me up. I was caught in the rush and collapsed, unconscious ... within me there was a steady flow of undiluted bliss, altogether new, and I felt the presence of the Divine Mother*'. Finally when *Totapuri* asked him '*to withdraw my mind from all objects and to become absorbed in contemplation of the Atman. But as soon as I withdrew my mind from the external world, the familiar form of the blissful Mother, radiant and of the essence of pure consciousness, appeared before me as a living reality and I could not pass beyond her... till my mind soared immediately beyond all duality and entered into nirvikalpa, the nondual, unitary consciousness.*' *Totapuri* wondering in exclamation '*Is it really true that this man has attained in the course of a single day what took me forty years of strenuous practice to achieve*'.

Aurobindo lead an active and tempestuous life during freedom movement and enlightenment of the omnipresence of God came to him in prison cell as he said '*I looked at the jail that secluded me from men and it was no longer by its high walls that I was imprisoned; no, it was Vasudeva who surrounded me. I walked under the branches of the tree in front of my cell but it was not the tree, I knew it was Vasudeva, it was Sri Krishna whom I saw standing there and holding over me his shade. I looked at the bars of my cell, the very grating that did duty for a door and again I saw Vasudeva. It was Narayana who was guarding and standing sentry over me. Or I lay on the coarse blankets that were given me for a couch and felt the arms of Sri Krishna around me, the arms of my Friend and Lover. This was the first use of the deeper vision He gave me. I looked at the prisoners in the jail, the thieves, the murderers, the*

swindlers, and as I looked at them I saw Vasudeva, it was Narayana whom I found in these darkened souls and misused bodies. Amongst these thieves and dacoits there were many who put me to shame by their sympathy, their kindness, the humanity triumphant over such adverse circumstances'.

Ramana Maharshi's enlightenment was completely different coming as *Death Experience* with '*Fear of Death vanished, absorption in the Self continued in unbroken stream from then onward. Other thoughts too passed along as musical notes would do, but the 'I' continued to dominate as the shruti note underlying and blending with all rest of the notes. Whether the body was engaged in speaking, reading or in any thing else, I still continued to be central point*'. Speaking about the realization in later days, he pondered, '*It is said that I took twenty minutes to realize*', then wondering '*It may be a moment*' and finally clarifying '*even that is not correct . . . where is the Time-element in it?*'.

These sensitive seers even after enlightenment continued to live rest of their lives in the body in which they are born, suffering all the infirmities caused and enjoying all the pleasures by the attributes and inclinations born of nature and shaped by the karmas of earlier lives, only their mind and *will* regulating with discrimination, the good and judicious approach they should have in rest of the life they lead. *Mahabharata* provides the distinct and distinguishing feature of human life extensively through the narrative, *Arjuna* appearing more a human responding to his attributes and inclinations born of nature, his divine attributes left to be highlighted, even as *Krishna* even while hailed as the highest spiritual person no attempts were made to conceal his temporal human side 'अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सन्| प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय सम्भावाम्यात्ममायया ||'. *Vyasa* with his incomparably vast, comprehensive and deep intelligence has seen diversity in creation and when asked *What is Life,* he says : *This is Life* with a panorama of people and events, attributes and attitudes making *Mahabharata* a vast storehouse containing everything that is worth knowing for a productive life and evolution and asserting that what is not contained here is not worth knowing 'धर्मे च अर्थे च कामे च मोक्षे च भरतर्षभ | यदिहास्ति तदन्यत्र यन्नेहास्ति न कुत्रचित्||', becoming a scripture adoration of *Krishna* 'भगवान वासुदेवश्चकीर्त्यतेऽत्र सनातनः | स हि सत्यममृतं चैव पवित्रं पुण्यमेव च ||' and not only temporal but also the science of deliverance 'धर्मशास्त्रमिदं पुण्यमर्थशास्त्रमिदं परम्| मोक्षशास्त्रमिदं प्रोक्तं व्यासेनामितबुद्धिना ||'.*Krishna* became the image, symbol and metaphor with broad contours delineated for seeking *divine essence* within him. Seeking is not the proper word to be used in such cases, since generally one seeks that which one knows to exist but which has not been found. *Divine essence* is some thing that exists for certain, which one is conscious without being aware. Seers and prophets declare it as some thing experienced, '*heard*' or '*seen*' through supra-sensory perception in purity of their heart and spoken through clarity of their mind. The forms and images with which seers delineate differ having spoken by different people in different places and in different periods. Therefore, *forms* and images provided by seers and prophets should not constrain seeker's vision but yet they do making perception narrower, as some thing seen through a window, traditional beliefs and faiths, religions and sects.

The words which seers use and prophets speak are not certain, specific or definitive being incomplete statements of their experiences. Therefore, they should be taken as suggestions rather than statements which they seek to suggest, trying to find the senses and not the meaning of the words. Words describe what one sees, not the *divine essence* which one experiences. *Divine essence* is not determined and limited by the words spoken or forms delineated. It is vaster than what the word as or images can constrain. Words are only the pegs on which one hangs one impression as one would hang clothes they are not the foundation on which one can build a mansion. They convey *Knowledge* not reveal *Wisdom.* If one depends on words excessively then one relies too much as on the walking stick. One should seek the space between the words spoken by the seers for there lies the divine essence bound by the words as the river is held by the two banks on both sides. One who has not realized the *divine essence* his attention is rooted on the words. One who realizes the *divine essence* ceases to remember the words spoken by the seers or the forms delineated by the prophets. The eyes which were seeking the words cease to bother the words having seen the *divine essence.*

Therefore, whatsoever *forms* are spoken by seers can be accepted as authoritative image for further enlightenment, accepting them as different from *the Prime Existence* which they have experienced. The *divine principle* becomes accessible, known and recognized and comprehended when that *form* comes to their presence by social acceptance or by tradition as to which form would represent which God. The conclusions may be similar but not be the same, because each one has different and unique personality, deep rooted in one's *self.* ||'. As *Sanatsujatiya* declared just as moon is pointed out pointing branch of the tree, and *Veda* is revealed using *vedic* scriptures as the pointer, even so words should be to point out the *divine essence* in the *Krishna-form*. Only he who has experienced the mystery of *Brahman* can express that experience. It is not necessary for one to go the east or west, south or the north in search of the *Self.* He can neither search in any quarters nor in any directions. Restraining senses one should endeavour without thinking through mind or any other organs. Not by restraining speech and going to forests one does not become a *Muni* but only by becoming enlightened to one's own *Self* within. 'धामांशभागस्य तथा हि वेदा यथा च शाखा हि महीरुहस्य | संवेदने चैव यथाऽऽमनन्ति तस्मिन् हि सत्यं परमात्मनोऽर्थे || अभिजानामि ब्राह्मणं व्याख्यातारं विचक्षणम्| यश्छिन्नविचिकित्सः स व्याचष्टे सर्वसंशयान्|| नास्य पर्येषणं गच्छेत्प्राचीनं नोत दक्षिणम्| नार्वाचीनं कुतस्तिर्यङ्नादिशं तु कथञ्चन || तस्य पर्येषणं गच्छेत्प्रत्यर्थिषु कथञ्चन | अविचिन्वन्निमं वेदे तपः पश्यति तं प्रभुम्|| तूष्णींभूत उपासीत न चेष्टेन्मनसापि च | उपावर्तस्व तद्ब्रह्म अन्तरात्मनि विश्रुतम्|| मौनान्न स मुनिर्भवति नारण्यवसनान्मुनिः | स्वलक्षणं तु यो वेद स मुनिः श्रेष्ठ उच्यते ||'.

The first invocatory hymn of *Isha Upanishad* speaks of *Krishna's* self luminous multi-dimensional personality 'ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते | पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ||' : *This is Complete; That is Complete. From the Complete is the Complete evolved. Even after the Complete is evolved from the Complete, the Complete remains Complete. Osho* points out that the hymn cannot be explained by scientists or mathematicians in temporal terms and context, because then it would appear as a mathematical travesty, since any thing removed from the *Whole*, howsoever small it may be, would leave the *Whole* to be less than whole. The true meaning of the hymn becomes revealed to spiritual person or a devotee - *Bhakta.* Unlike the mathematical problem which as precise, temporal and measurable can be explained, a hymn cannot be explained being imprecise, spiritual and immeasurable. It is like Love when given, the Lover does not become poorer but remains *Full* as earlier, the *Whole. Krishna* is the epitome and embodiment of Love प्रेमस्वरूपा and अनिर्वचनीय. *Krishna* does not become diminished by evolving and sharing his Love with his devotees.

To an empirical person whose external vision is in pieces, fragments and segments *Krishna* appears to them in pieces, fragments and segments, simple in some places and enigmatic in others, performing actions which in empirical world appear contradictory and conflicting to every recognized ethical canons of ethics and morality, questionable and considered reprehensible hardly one which could be expected from one who is accepted as supreme being having taken descent to destroy the unrighteous and establish righteousness. But a spiritual one who has established camaraderie and companionship with *Krishna* internally will be inclined to accept him as one of the great human beings born in the history of *Time*, who was spiritually resplendent not only for people in India but also to many other human beings across the world, accepting as पूर्णावतार whole, complete and entirety of manifestation. At the same it would be immature and juvenile to accept, as large segment of people are given to believe that *divine essence*, whether referred to as *Krishna* or otherwise, descends in forms only in *Bharatavarsha* to the exclusion of all other nations. God belongs to India as well as to other nations, to Hindus as well to *Hebrews, Buddhists, Christians Muslims,* to the fully enlightened and expressed as well as to the obscured ones and not capable to be expressible or expressed. Therefore, *Krishna* says 'यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्त्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा | तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोऽंशसम्भवम्||'.

Krishna is not the *form* but the *essence*, therefore unless one siezes the *essence* within the *form Krishna* will not be known.

Krishna As the Divine Essence

'To see world in a grain of sand and heaven in a wild flower, hold infinity in the palm of your hand and eternity in an hour' was what *William Blake* desired and what every one desiring spiritual truths seeks. If one approaches *Mahabharata* to know *Krishna* as a historical figure then he will not find him there and if found he is not likely to be understood or judged truly. However if one approaches *Mahabharata* as one would approach a scripture, then *Krishna* may be found both in *form* and *essence*, understand and judged differently, as the *divine essence* established in human *form*, and not either as *divine essence* or as *gross form* but revealing the mystical truth as no other *form* nor any other document would reveal, how *gross form* becomes an effective tool for the *divine essence* to manifest as the narrater declared: 'धर्मे चार्थे च कामे च मोक्षे च भरतर्षभ | यदिहास्ति तदन्यत्र यन्नेहास्ति न कुत्रचित्||, ... धर्मशास्त्रमिदं पुण्यशास्त्रमिदं परम्| मोक्षशास्त्रमिदं प्रोक्तं व्यासेनामितबुद्धिना || भरतं सर्वशास्त्राणामुत्तमं भरतर्षभ | सम्पत्याचक्षते चेदं तथा श्रोष्यन्ति चापरे ||'.

In recording the events that lead to the internecine struggle between *Kauravas* and *Pandavas* and the important part played by *Krishna* - '..विस्तरं कुरुवंशस्य गान्धार्या धर्मशीलताम्|| क्षत्तुः प्रज्ञां धृतिं कुन्त्याः सम्यग्द्वैपायनोऽब्रवीत्| वासुदेवस्य माहात्म्यं पाण्डवानां च सत्यताम्|| दुर्वृत्तं धार्तराष्ट्राणामुक्तवान्भगवानृषिः |' *Vyasa* too used the same methodology which seers had used in expressing their enlightned experiences in *vedic* hymns. Therefore, *Mahabharata* came to be accepted as a scripture, a comprehensive aggregation of thoughts, ideas and experiences, presented with mystical truths posited in various places which *Vyasa* and his son *Shuka* knew and perhaps *Sanjaya* too 'ग्रन्थग्रन्थिं तदा चक्रे मुनिर्गूढं कुतूहलात्| यस्मिन्प्रतिज्ञया प्राह मुनिर्द्वैपायनस्त्विदम्|| अष्टौ श्लोकसहस्राणि अष्टौ श्लोकशतानि च | अहं वेद्मि शुको वेत्ति संजयो वेत्ति वा न वा ||'. In *Vyasa's* genius, *Krishna* became the symbol and metaphor, as subtle *divine essence* established in *gross form* with attributes and inclinations born of nature displayed, as one who not only was consciously enlightened of the *divine essence* within but also of the *divine intent and purpose* to be fulfilled in external life.

What *Sri Aurobindo* said about *vedic* scriptures holds good in the case of *Mahabharata* also, '*One of the leading principles of the mystics was the sacredness and secrecy of self-knowledge and the true language of the Gods. This wisdom, they thought, unfit, perhaps even dangerous to the ordinary human mind or in any case liable to perversion and misuse and loss of virtue if revealed to vulgar and unpurified spirits. Hence they favoured existence of an outer worship, effective but imperfect, for the profane an inner discipline for the initiate, and clothed their language and words and images which had, equally, a spiritual sense for the elect, a concrete sense for the elect, a concrete sense for the mass of ordinary worshippers*'. *George Whaley* agreed with similar sentiments, '*A myth is a direct metaphysical statement beyond science. It embodies in an articulated structure of symbol or narrative a vision of reality. It is condensed account of man's being and attempts to represent reality with structural fidelity, to indicate at a single stroke the salient and fundamental relations which for a man constitute relations which for man constitute reality... Myth is not obscure, oblique, or elaborate way of expressing reality - it is only way. Myth has a purpose, its source and end, revelation; myth is not make-believe but the most direct and positive assertion of belief that man can discover. Myth is an indispensable principle of unity in individual lives and in the life of society*'.

All prophets accept existence of allegory in scriptures. When *Jesus* was asked by his disciples why he spoke to people in parables, he explained, '*Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given... because they seeing see not; and haring they hear not, neither do they understand..But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear*'. In *Koran* we find it mentioned, '*Mankind were one community, and Allah sent prophets as bearers of good tidings... those unto whom it was given differed concerning it... through hatred of one another. And Allah*

by His will guided those who believe unto the truth of that concerning which they differed, Allah guideth whom He will unto a straight path... the Scripture wherein are clear revelations They are the substance of the Book and others allegorical'.

What seers attain is not a gross identifiable *form*; it is the subtle *experience* which has neither *form* nor any *framework*. The *forms* in which different seers expressed their experience differ without having any similarity of *forms* of expressions, it being said 'एकं मद्विप्रा बहुधा वदान्ति'. Comparative study of various enlightened expressions does not lie in finding which seers speak or have spoken truly of *the Prime Existence* but how the various seers have given expressions to their experience of the *one Brahman, One God, One Tao, One Allah* in their empirical background shaped and formed by the society and the stage in spiritual evolution. One must, therefore, sincerely and sensitively be receptive, reflective and meditative of the conflicting and contradictory *forms* of *Krishna's* thoughts, speech and actions to understand the *divine essence* attributed to him, pause briefly at the frame-work of the window or threshold of the door to see the vast resplendent *divine essence* which the threshold of the window or frame-work of the door obstructed the view. Seeking would fail if one makes the frame-work of the window or threshold of the door the barrier, because seeking based on *form* could narrow the vision or slow down the stride in one's search. Seeking *divine essence* sitting alone and concentrating on the particular symbol, image or an icon repeating *mantras* and burning incense at particular time and in particular manner would not serve the purpose of reaching *Krishna's* multi-dimensional *divine forms*, let alone reach depth of his *divine essence.*

Upanishads point out that the supreme *Brahman* has two aspects, 'मूर्तम्चैवामूर्तम्' *form* and *formless*, gross रूप and subtle नाम. The *subtle* नाम the *essenece* is not easy to be comprehended, 'क्लेशोऽधिकतरस्तेषामव्यक्तासक्तचेतसाम्| अव्यक्ता हि गतिर्दुःखं देहवद्भिरवाप्यते ||' ; easily perceived in रूप the manifest *gross form*. The *subtle* नाम, the *principle* cannot be thought, therefore difficult to be worshipped. Unless one being fully receptive reflects and meditates on the *subtle* नाम the *essenece* as one harmonious whole, amidst chaos, balancing the chaotic *forms*, not seeing any diversity in the *froms* and expressions without any pre-conditioned ideas, views and opinions, one will not be consciously aware of the *Wisdom* of the supreme *Consciousness.* It is only by accepting *forms* as the foot marks did *Vyasa* find the *divine essence* in *Krishna's* thoughts, speech and actions, even as one meditates on *Brahman* using *Vishnu's* image - 'नामोपास्सव ब्रह्मेति ब्रह्मबुद्ध्या | यथा प्रतिमां विष्णुबुद्ध्योपास्ने तद्वत्||' as *Shankara* says. The fruit cannot be enjoyed unless the skin is removed, the gird is removed, pulp is chewed and juice is sucked. *Krishna-form* is the outer skin of the fruit, which is to be peeled before one can relish the *divine essence the supreme Consciousness* within.

When queried that some worship meditating one or the other of fire, air, sun, time breath, food, *Brahman, Rudra, Vishnu,* which one would be the one supreme among them, *Maitri Up.* clarifies that they are all the principal forms of the Supreme, the immortal and formless *Brahman*. To whomsoever one attaches himself in him he rejoices, since everything in the world is verily, *Brahman*; he meditates on the forms, worships and discards, having moved higher and higher in the worlds and attains the *Purusha* 'अग्निर्वायुरादित्यः कालो यः प्राणोऽन्न ब्रह्म रुद्रो विष्णुरिति एकेऽन्य अभिध्यायन्ति एकेऽन्यम्|...ब्रह्मणो वा वैता अग्रस्तनवः परस्यामृतस्य अशरीरस्य तस्यैव लोके प्रतिमोदाति ह यो यस्यानुशक्ता इत्येयं हि आह | ब्रह्म खल्विदं व व सर्वम्...यावास्य अग्यास्तनवस्ताभिध्ययेद अर्चयन्निह्नुयच्च | अतस्ताभि सहैवोपरि उपरि लोकेषु चरति | अतः कृत्सनचय एकत्वं एति पुरुषस्य पुरुषस्य ||'. All visual *forms* essenetially are of the immortal and *formless Supreme Brahman,* to whichever *form* one attaches oneself, in that *form* he experiences the *divine essence.*

Human speech is ideographic as well as pictographic *form*, speech only assists, never being an efficient and sufficient tool to reveal the *divine essence*, *Upanishads* declaring 'यतो वाचो निवर्तन्ते अप्राप्य मनसा सह |'. The *divine essence* becomes accessible only when it becomes established in *form*, - 'यच्च रूपं परं गुह्यं कूटस्थामचलं धुवम्| न दृश्यते तथा देवैर्मद्भक्तैर्दृश्यातं यथा ||', as the branch assists one in pointing out the moon says

Sanatsujatiya but does not make one enlightened of the moon 'धामांशभागस्य तथा हि वेदा यथा च शाखा हि महीरुहस्य | संवेदने चैव यथाऽऽमनन्ति तस्मिन्हि सत्ये परमात्मनोऽर्थे || अभिजानामि ब्राह्मणं व्याख्यातारं विचक्षणम्|'. The *form* which indicates the *divine essence* is not the *divine essence*, which is *formless* and therefore, indescribable, अचिन्त्यरूप अव्यक्तमूर्ति neither revealed in the gross *form* nor is seized by nature, nor is cognizable by mind. No religion can claim to communicate *divine essence* without using some ideographic or pictographic *forms* in one way or the other.

Therefore we find from the beginning of human civilization, as one knows, various *divine forms* being used to access the *divine essence*, for instance, *Atum, Re, Amun, Ptah, Horus, Isis, Hapi, Seth, Troth, Nut, Amon, Shu* etc, in ancient *Egypt; Enki, Enlil, Nanna, Nergal, Ninazu. Ninurta, Ereskigal, Ishtar, Nammu* in *Mesopotamia; Apsu, Tiamat, Anu, Antu, Mammetum, Nammu in ancient Sumeria, Assyrian* and *Babylonia; Aphrodite, Athena, Ares, Hermes, Poseidon, Eros* and *Zeus* among Greeks, *Venus, Mars, Pluto, Vulcan, Juno, Mercury, Jupiter* and *Cupid* among *Romans; Ch'eng-Huang, Chu Jung, Kuan Ti, Kwan Yin* and *Lei kun* in China.

No one can speak of the *divine essence* without using ideographic as well as pictographic fors to symbolize the *divine essence*, even the monotheistic religions like *Judaism, Christianity* and *Islam* who professing one *absolute formless divine essence* and prohibiting: '*Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath or that is in the waters under the earth*', though '*God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created he him*' as in *Old Testament*. In spite of such claims, verbalization of *forms* becomes inevitable as one finds in *Old Testament*, the *Lord* coming unto *Abraham* in a vision, becoming visualized in human attributes and inclination, making covenant saying '*unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river of Euphrates*', becoming '*a father with many nations*' or when *Moses* was curious to see why '*the bush is not burnt even as God appears in a flame of fire*, calling him out of the midst of the bush, '*Moses, Moses... Draw not nigh hither: put of thy shoes from thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground*' and warning the Is realities '*Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them (any other gods) nor serve them; foe I am the LORD, they God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me*'.

New Testament could not do without imagery and visualization through human attributes and inclination being used like the spirit of biblical God '*descending like a dove, with voice saying This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*', '*Blessed are the peacemakers : for they shall be called the children of God*', '*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of the heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven*', '*I thank thee, O my Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and has revealed unto babes*', '*For whoever shall do the will of my Father which in heaven, the same is my brother, my sister, and mother*'. Finally when he was crucified *Jesus* calls his *Father* '*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*'

Islam is fiercely against any representation of Allah or his prophets in ideographic and pictographic *form*, though angel *Gabriel* is said t have appeared to *Muhammad in the likeness of a man, standing in the sky above the horizon*, though verbalization of the *form* with cointetenance, hands, and eyes speak appear on Koran. *llah* is neither male or female, nothing but the absolute inconceivable Supreme Being, one finds in *Koran* references which are distinctive o human language as '*Allah has sealed the hearing their (the disbelievers) hearing and their hearts and on their eyes there is a covering. Theirs will be an awful doom*', '*Allah doth mock them, leaving them to wander blindly on in their journey*', '*Lo Allah is able to do all things*', '*He it is Who created for you all that is in the earth. Then turned He to the heaven and fashioned it as seven heavens. And He is Knower of all things. And when thy Lord said unto the angels: Lo! I am about to place a viceroy in the earth*'.

Ideographic and pictographic representation of *divine essence* is no where as expansive as in *vedic* religions where *divine essence* being increasingly presented in anthropomorphic *forms* as

indispensable human need in communication. The process was continued with abundance in post *vedic* scriptures and *Puranas,* with multitude of gods and goddesses, representing every element in nature. In *Rigveda* we have deities like *Indra*, the chief of gods, *Agni,* the fire and messenger of gods, *Vishvedevas, Maruts,* storm gods, *Ashvins, Aditi* as the mother of the gods, *Surya* - the Sun, *Vayu,* the wind, *Dyaus and Prithivi* - Heaven and Earth, *Ushas* -the dawn, *Apas* - the waters, *Yama* - god of death, *Vishnu* and *Rudra, Savitr, Rbhus, Pushan, Brahmanaspati, Parjanya, Vac* - Speech, *Manas* - Thought, *Dakshina* - Reward, *Jnanam* -Knowledge, *Bhaga, Ghrta* as well very popular *puranic* gods like *Shiva, Ganesha, Krishna, Rama, Hanuman and goddesses like Lakshmi, Durga, Kali* and *Saraswati*, every animate being whether human, animal, bird or reptile, every inanimate manifestation, whether rivers or the mountains, trees or the plants, every mood, inclination and attributes being represented as aspects of divine manifestation of *Krishna* or as thousand names of *Vishnu* or as various aspects of *Durga* narrated in *Durgasaptashati* or in *Lalaitashahasranama* or one or the other gods and goddesses, nothing left for imagination all included as one great aggregation of divine manifestation. Even the religious icons were fortified with human attributes and inclination born of nature with dominance of the *I-sense* and ego seen in many godheads - 'प्रकृतं कियमाणानि गुर्णः सर्वशः | अहङ्कारविमूढात्मा कर्तागमिव मन्यतं ||'.

There is, however, an in-built danger in seeking *divine essence* in the temporal personalities of *Krishna, Buddha, Abraham, Moses, Jesus* or *Muhammad* inducing one to worship their *forms* rather than the *divine essence* which is seen in them or as the representative *forms* for seeking *Brahman* or the ultimate *divine principle* by whatever name refrreded as *Yavehah or Allah,* declared as 'पुरुप एवेदं विश्वं कर्म तपां ब्रह्म परामृतम्| एतद्यो वेद निहितं गुहायां सोऽविद्याग्रन्थीं विकिरतीह सोम्य ||' or '*I AM THAT I AM... I am the Lord and I appeared unti Abraham, unti Isaac and unto Jacob by th name of God Almighty, but bymay name JEHOVaH was I not known to them*' or as '*Allah, the Beneficient, the Merciful*', experienced in the purity of the heart and spoken through clarity of mind by various seers of different places and in different periods. The exclusive claim of the adherents of these gods, questions the universality of the *Prime Divine Principle*, reducing the religions tribal, territorial, as native and as alien, just because those *forms* differ from one another having spoken in different places and periods.

Therefore, one should be cautious and careful to use *Krishna-form* as something necessary to reach to the *divine essence* in *Krishna-form*, even as a ladder becomes necessary to reach the top. *Krishna-form* is not the object, it is only the means, like the fingure which points out the moon, is not the moon. Like the ladder which leads the terrace, is not the terrace, like the fingure which points out the moon, is not the moon. It would at the same time be unwise to burden oneself with the ladder once the terrace is reached or one to keep the fingure pointed once the objected is sighted. Therefore, a great lies when one should hold the ladder and when one should leave one's hold on the ladder. Mother is needed for one to have a birth, Guru is required form one to be knowledgeable, Built it would he harmful to remain in the mother's womb longer than needed, to hold on to the Guru once the one is enlightened to *Wisdom.*

Seeking divine essence in ideographic and pictographic representation would otherwise fail if in seeking the *divine essence* in a *form*, with concentration on one *form* to the exclusion of all others *forms* restricts the interest, one would end up confining the scope and narrowing down the search to the *particular form* which one has in mind instead broadening the boundaries required and available for experience of the *universal essence.* Finding it difficult the embodied beings to experience the un-manifest 'क्लेशोऽधिकतरस्तेषामव्यक्तासक्तचेतसाम्| अव्यक्ता हि गतिर्दु:खं देहवद्भिरवाप्यते ||' *Vyasa* himself had in his inimitable skill and genius elaborated through ideographic and pictographic visual representation the mystery of *Krishna's divine descent* becoming effulgent and becoming absorbed again declaring 'अव्यक्ताद्व्यक्तयः सर्वाः प्रभवन्त्यहरागमे | रात्र्यागमे प्रलीयन्ते तत्रैवाव्यक्तसंज्ञके ||'. He suggests the three stages of manifestation as अधिभौतिक (*elemental or concerning the mind and ten sense organs of perception and action*) where multitude of existences come in to creation again and again - 'भूतग्रामः स एवायं भूत्वा भूत्वा प्रलीयते | रात्र्यागमेऽवशः पार्थ प्रभवत्यहरागमे ||'.

अधिदैविक (the *deities presiding over the mind and sense organs*) where beyond the unmanifest existence there is another unmanifest eternal being which does not perish even when all existences perish 'परस्तस्मात्तु भावोऽन्योव्यक्तोध्यक्तात्सनातनः | यः स सर्वेषु भूतेषु नश्यस्तु न विनश्यति ||' and finally अध्यात्मिक (*the spiritual distinct and superior to* अधिभौतिक and अधिदैविक stages where the unmanifest is called imperishable, spoken as the *Supreme Status*, which those who attain never return 'अव्यक्तोऽक्षर इत्युक्तस्तमाहुः परमां गतिम्| यं प्राप्य न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ||.

In life one is concerned with development of two aspects of one's personality external and internal. The sense organs - the eye, ear, nose, touch and tongue respond and are capable to respond only to the external responses, therefore sense organs look to external influences. Since sense organs do not and are not capable to respond to internal impressions, they become ineffective to see the internal influences, King *Janaka* asks '*When the Sun has set, and the moon has set, and the fire has gone and speech is stopped, what light does a person here have?*'. *Yajnavalkya* replies '*The Self indeed is his light for with the Self, indeed, as the Light one sits, moves about, does one's work and returns*'. Even the two eyes see the world separately but it is the energy within which the two visions harmonize and synthesize them.

In life generally one sees what one desires to see, it is not necessarily that one sees all that exists in life. Other than what he desires all else beyond his comprehension. Life is made of choices. *Katha Up* says that both प्रेय (the Pleasant) and श्रेय (the Proper) approach a human being. The wise one pondering over them discriminates and chooses the Proper in preference to the Pleasant. The dull-witted person for the sake of worldly pleasures chooses the Pleasant in preference to the Proper. One is not conscious of that which is *Existence* because one cannot see it as one would see a table or a tree. Therefore one does neither believe that a thing could exist which one's senses do not access nor does one believed that such thing could ever exist. Therefore if one does not believe in the existence of some *supreme divine essence* then it is because one is neither inclined to nor desires to be wise of such wisdom. For one whom possessions and positions, success pride and *self-sence* in temporal world appear captivating and desirable, for such one will see no purpose in spiritual world.

One believes in *the Prime Existence* as some centre of primary energy, by what ever name he may refer this energy, when he comes to realize the insufficiency and the inefficiency of the things perceived in primordial life, not the one who has not realized yet the insufficiency and the inefficiency of the possessions and positions, success pride and *self-sense* in temporal world. His sense of discrimination obscured by the fleeting, transitory and ephemeral possessions and positions, success pride and *self-senses* he does not desire the spiritual world or *the Prime Existence* as some centre of primary energy not having taken root in his heart. Therefore every one chooses the *Path* where one can be enlightened, the external for the gross and the internal for the subtle, the scriptures remaining neutral like the Sunlight -'पुरुषाः स्वयमेव यथारुचि साधनाविषेषु प्रवर्तन्ते | शास्त्रं नु सवितृप्रकाश्वत्उदास्त एव ||'. One who desires to become consciously aware of the wisdom of supreme *divine essence* transcending and delivered from the captivating forms visible in the world of sensory experiences chooses to experience *the Prime Existence*. And the strange aspect of such journey is that even as you come nearer the spiritual world of *the Prime Existence*, far and far you go from the temporal world of empirical experiences. When *Shankara* referred *samsara* as माया, illusory then he suggests is that there is far greater real and substantive energy within than the energy which is perceived without. Therefore, for *Shankara* the empirical world is not the culmination and conclsion but intermediate and instrumental there being far greater stable and spiritual reality within which he experienced. He is one born in human womb and therefore is subjecet to the attibutes and inclinations born of nature. While an ordeinary persons may cndiser that he is the doer and not the attibutes and inclinations born of nature *Shankara* accepts the limitations and copnstraints placed by nature of his actions and has no hesitation to say that he feels hunger to be fed and thirst to be quenched. His thirst for *the Prime Existence* does not deny his empirical experiences which were equally important. Therefore he said before one becomes enlightened of the

self with *Brahman*, sensory world has definite purpose and role- 'प्राक्ब्रह्मात्मदर्शनात् विषयादिप्रपञ्चो व्यवस्थितरूपो भवति |', saying further that hundreds of scriptural stateless cannot be authoritative if they declares the fire is cold lacking luminosity - 'न हि प्रत्यक्ष विरोधे श्रुतेः प्रमाणम्| न हि श्रुतिशतमपि शीतोऽग्निः अप्रकाशः इति ब्रुवत्प्रामाण्यं उपैति |'.

Therefore the general impression that *Light* destroys *Darkness* and *Knowledge* destroys *Ignorance,* is unacceptable to the sensitive seers. Senses apprehend only the external *forms* and never the internal *essence.* Therefore, the seeker having struggled to control the influence of the senses on mind transcends the forces of *Darkness* and *Ignorance*. *Darkness* comes over one's eyes when the brilliance of the Light makes the mind blind of vision and excess of Knowledge confounds and bewilders his intelligence. It is easier to fight *Darkness* and *Ignorance* than to overcome intense brilliance of the *Light* and limitations of sensory *Knowledge* which become barrier for conscious awareness of सत्य, *the Prime Existence.* This is the भौतिक and दैविक stage which the seeker has reached after having gone through performance of ordained actions, purifying mind through austerity and penance, through scriptural knowledge, detachments to fruits of actions and established in Wisdom 'कर्मयोगः सत्वबुद्धिः ज्ञानप्राप्तिः सर्वकर्मसन्यासः ज्ञाननिष्ठा कमेण शान्तिः ||'.

Soon the seeker becomes conscious that the light which comes from the elemental Sun is not the *Light* which represents the *divine essence* within the elemental Sun, which can become accessible to him only when the captivating golden disc which conceals the auspicious face of the supreme Lord is removed by his grace. Therefore the seeker of the supreme *Bliss of Beatitude* prays *Pushan,* the sole seer and regulator, to gather and restrain radiance of his rays, so that he who is attuned to सत्य, *the Prime Existence* may see the auspicious face - 'हिरण्मयेन पात्रेण सत्यस्यापिहितं मुखम्| तत्वं पूषन्नपावृणु सत्यधर्माय दृष्टये || पूषन्नेकर्षे यम सूर्य प्राजपत्य व्यूह रश्मीन्समूह | तेजो यत्ते रूपं कल्याणतमं तत्ते पश्यामि योऽसावसौ पुरुषः सोऽहमस्मि ||'. *Upanishadic mantra* has additional concepts in subsequent supplication, 'पूषन्नेकर्षे यम सूर्य प्राजापत्य व्यूह रश्मीन्समूह |'. *Yama* is the one regulates the coming and going. यम means to check, restrain, control, subdue - यमयति ते. Eternal Sun is the goal and purpose of seer's endeavour. With the destruction of the ignorance and darkness, what comes is peace and tranquility. Therefore, *Yama* is not to be feared, when one sees him as the one who destroys the human body which is incapable of giving enlightenment and gives opportunity to have a new one anew opportunity. Regulating the cosmic balance and correcting the imbalance is the task of the great taskmaster *Yama*. *Surya* is called here *Yama* the regulator, the energiser of the living and destroyer of the dead. Seeker knows that he is circumscribed by obscurity and ignorance unable to see सत्य, *the Prime Existence*, therefore asks *Surya* to be *Yama*, the regulator. Because he knows that he is in essence a fragment of the divine essence योऽसावसौ पुरुषः सोऽहमस्मि. It is the same *That supreme Savitru* - तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यम्which was within the elemental Sun and capable of energizing the seeker's intellect, which seer *Vishvamitra* prays when addressed goddess *Savita-Surya* 'ॐ भूः भुवः स्वः तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यम्भर्गोदेवस्य धीमहि धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात्' and not to the elemental Sun, which as the uninformed normally understand. Meditation is only the means up to certain stage, Grace alone bringing the final conclusion and culmination with his qualification being firmly established, so that he can overcome the burden of the captivating *forms* and luminous images and revel enlightened of his *Bliss of Beatitude*. Prayer is the ultimate recourse and surrender is the final conclusion.

Normally, the अधिभौतिक stage is on temporal level where darkness or ignorance obscure one from becoming aware of सत्य, *the Prime Existence*. On the अधिदैविक stage, one is offered luminous *forms* of सत्य, *the Prime Existence* in gross anthropomorphic forms as aids and supports, but which end up captivating and mesmerizing the seekers with the golden discs, making them often the victim of suggestion, loosing the course and the momentum. Therefore it is only on the अध्यात्मिक stage that the *divine essence* of the *Purusha,* represented and concealed by the resplendent *forms* become redundant, removed and discarded only the divine essence becoming revealed as the goal and purpose in life. अधिभौतिक is the stage where the elemental Sun is seen as a fiery luminous ball in the sky as one of the many

planets. In this stage the energizing power of the elemental Sun which is obscured under the influence of sensory influences, is pointed out pointed out as the *divine essence* of the *Purusha* concealed within the gross form of the elemental Sun. Only the one who understands both the manifest and the unmanifest, the *form* and the *essence* together desires to attain the eternal transcending the transient. He becomes a questor, he becomes qualified as seeker, saint and a seer, through perfected penance and intense austerities traversing the tortuous *Path* which is 'क्षुरस्य धाग निंशिता दुरत्यया दुर्गम्पथस्तत्कवयो वदन्ति |' and strewn with captivating colours and vivid visuals - 'तस्मिञ्छुक्लमुत नीलमाहुः पिङ्गलं हरितं लोहितं च | एष पन्था ब्राम्हणा हानुवित्तस्तेनैति बस्मवित्पुण्यकरत्तैजसश्च ||'. He reaches the अधिदैविक *Path* distancing himself from the effort as well as from the objects, becoming illumined through stages, as *Mundaka Up*. delineates - 'नदेतसत्यं मन्त्रेपु कर्माणि कावयो यान्यऽयंस्तानि त्रेतायां बहुधा सन्तनानि |', 'तपश्रद्धे ये ह्युपवमन्त्यरण्ये शान्ता विद्वांसो भैक्ष्यचर्यां चरन्तः |', 'परीक्ष्य लोकान्कर्मचितान्ब्राम्हणो निर्वेदमायान्नास्त्यकृतः कृतेन | तद्विज्ञानार्थं स गुरुमेवाभिगच्छेत्समित्पाणिः श्रोत्रियं वस्मनिष्ठम्||'. This however is not easy to be accomplished, because while the earlier stages अधिभौतिक and अधिदैविक depend on human effort and enterprise, austerity and penance, the अध्यात्म stage is possible only with the *divine intervention* - 'नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो न मेधाया न बहुना श्रुतेन | यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यस्तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनू ँ स्वाम्||'. *Divine intervention* is needed and necessary because the mind is not bold to take the leap nor the heart has courage to renounce the things which one possesses.

Finally he takes leap to the अध्यात्मिक stage 'स वेदैत्परमं ब्रस्म धाम यत्र विश्वं निहितं भाति शुभ्रम्| उपासते पुरुषं ये ह्यकामास्ते शुक्रमेतदतिवर्तन्ति धीराः ||', 'यदा पश्यः पश्यते रुक्मवर्णं कर्तारमीशं पुरुषं ब्रस्मयोनिम्| तदा विद्वान्पुण्यपापे विधूय निरञ्जनः परमं साम्यमुपैति ||', 'वेदान्तविज्ञानसुनिश्चितार्थाः सन्न्यासयोगाद्यतयः शुद्धसत्त्वाः | ते ब्रस्मलोकेषु परान्तकाले परामृताः परिमुच्यन्ति सर्वे || सम्प्राप्यैनमृषयो ज्ञानतृप्ताः कृतात्मनो वीतरागाः प्रशान्ताः | ते सर्वगं सर्वतः प्राप्य धीरा युक्तात्मानः सर्वमेवाविशन्ति ||', with his eye of *Wisdom* directed to *the prime Principle* the seer ever sees 'तद्विष्णोः परमं पदं सदा पश्यन्ति सूरयः | दिविव चक्षुराततम्||'. It is on this stage he becomes aware of *Krishna* as the *divine essence* in *human form*, complete, whole and entirety of *supreme Consciousness*, harmonizing all contradictions and dualities, the good and bad, the noble and ignoble, righteous and the unrighteous, the spiritual and empirical, with no one other to be compared to, every thing being *Krishna's divine essence*experiencing सत्य, *the Prime Existence*, the transcendent luminous Light which is beyond all obscurity, the Light which is most excellent - 'उद्वयं तमस्परि ज्योतिष्पश्यन्त उत्तरम्| देवं देवत्रा सूर्यं अगन्म ज्योतिरुत्तरम्||' and will exult as another seer did 'वेदाहं एतं पुरुषं महान्तं आदित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात्| तमेव विदित्याति मृत्युं एति नान्यः पन्था विद्यते अयनाय ||'. *Divine intervention* gives that confidence and courage to take the leap from the edge where one stands hesitatingly on the precipice. Till that moment, one has not dared even though the *Bliss of Beatitude* was all there. He had known that he is capable to be bold mad courageous. It is only once he comes out of his shell that he knows that he could have dared earlier and taken the bold steps to be free and enlightened. The seer therefore, being qualified with knowledge of the scriptures and equipped with purity of character prays in supplication for the *divine intervention*.

Isha Up mentions this the statge when सत्य as *the Prime Existence* manifests: 'ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्ण मुदच्यते | पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते || ईशा वास्यमिद ँसर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत् | तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्य स्विद्धनम्||' - *That was Complete ; This is Complete. From Complete is the Complete evolved. The Complete, having evolved from the Complete, remains, verily, as the Complete. Whatever exists in the world is enveloped by the great Lord. Therefore one should enjoy what has been ordained with detachment, not coveting what has been ordained for others*. This is the state in which *Krishna* abides in, designated as सत्य, which *Vishnu Purana* describes as *Vasudeva* 'वासयति भूतानि स्वस्मिन् इति वासुः सचासौ देवश्च दीव्यते इति स्वप्रकाशः स वासुदेव इत्यर्थः |'

सत्य according to *Brihad Aranyaka Up*. consists of three syllables स, ति, यम् . The first and the last syllables represent *the Prime Existence* holding the middle, which is non-*Existence* - 'तदेतत्त्र्यक्षरम्- सत्यमिति; स इत्येकमक्षरम्, तीत्येकमक्षरम्, यमित्येकक्षरम्; प्रथमोत्तमे अक्षरे सत्यम्, मध्यतोऽनृतम्; तदेतदनृतमुभयतः सत्येन परिगृहीतम्, सत्येन परिगृहीतम्, सत्यभूयमेव भवति; नैवं विद्वांसमनृतं हिनस्ति ||'. He who becomes aware of this transcends yonder. *Chhandogya Up*. likewise reiterates 'तानि ह वा एतानि त्रीण्यक्षराणि सतीयमिति तद्यत्सत्तदमृतमथ यति तन्मर्त्यमथ यद्यं तेनोभे यच्छति यदनेनोभे यच्छति तस्माद्यमहरहवी एवंवित्स्वर्गं लोकमिति ||' declaring further that within the heart there is the space, *the Prime Existence* dwells within that space which is to be sought 'अथ यदिदमस्मिन्ब्रस्मपुरे दहरं पुण्डरीकं वेश्म दहरोऽस्मिन्नन्तराकाशस्तस्मिन्यदन्तस्तदन्वेष्टव्यमं तद्वाव

विजिज्ञासितव्यम्|'. As far as this world-space extends so far extends the space within the heart, containing heaven and earth, fire and air, sun and moon, lightening and stars and whatever exists of him in the world or does not exist, all that is contained within the space 'उभे अस्मिन्द्यावापृथिवी अन्तरेव समाहिते उभावग्निश्च वायुश्च सूर्य चन्द्रमावुभौ विद्युन्नक्षत्राणि यच्चास्येहास्ति यच्च नास्ति सर्वं तदस्मिन्समाहितमिति ||'. The *Prime Existence* within does not age with body becoming old, not destroyed with destruction of the body, therein the desires of the *self* are restrained free from disadvantage, from old age, death, sorrow, hunger, thirst, all desires and rationale converged on सत्य, 'अस्य जरयैतज्जीर्यति न वधेनास्य हन्यत एतत्सत्यं ब्रह्मपुरमस्मिन्कामाः समाहिता एष आत्मापहतपाप्मा विजरो विमृत्युर्विशोको विजिघत्सोऽपिपासः सत्यकामः सत्यसङ्कल्पो ...|'.

The *self* exists within the heart 'स वा एष हृदि तस्यैतदेव निरुक्तं हृदयमिति |'. which rising out of this body and reaching the supreme light becomes established in its true nature, which is the Self, the immortal, beyond fear, *Brahman*, designated, verily as सत्य, *the prime Existence* 'अथ य एष सम्प्रसादोऽस्माच्छरीरात्समुत्थाय परं ज्योतिरूपसंपद्य स्वेन रूपेणाभिनिष्पद्यत एष आत्मेति होवाचैतदमृतमभयमेतद्ब्रह्मेति तस्य ह वा एतस्य ब्रह्मणो नाम सत्यमिति ||'. The object and purpose of human life and therefore, of this study is to cross the bridge of luminous light and obscure darkness, of the day and night, of old age and sorrow, of good deeds and evil deeds to reach the goal as one would reach *Vishnu* in the *Shalagram* stone, since it is said *Brahman*, like the sprout in the seed, as *Shankara* clarifies 'यथा विष्णोः शालग्रामः | अस्मिन्हि स्वविकारशुङ्गे देहे नामरूपव्याकरणाय प्रविष्टं सदाख्यं ब्रह्म जीवेनात्मनेत्युक्तम्||'. On crossing the bridge the ignorant remains no longer ignorant, obscure one no more obscure, even as blind remains no longer blind, wounded no longer wounded, afflicted no longer afflicted, seeing darkness appear as luminous light, verily, everything thing is enlightened awareness. This verily is the world of *Brahman* 'अथ य आत्मा स सेतुर्विधृतिरेषां लोकानामसम्भेदाय नैतं सेतुमहोरात्रे तरतो न जरा न मृत्युर्न शोको न सुकृतं न दुष्कृतं सर्वे पाप्मानोऽतोनिवर्तन्तेऽपहतपाप्मा ह्येष ब्रह्मलोकः || तस्माद्वा एतं सेतुं तीर्त्वान्धः सन्ननन्धो भवति विद्धः सन्नविद्धो भवत्युपतापी सन्ननुपतापी भवति तस्माद्वा एतं सेतुं तीर्त्वापि नक्तमहरेवाभिनिष्पद्यते सकृद्विभातो ह्येवैष ब्रह्मलोकः ||'.

Brhaman as manifestation, it is neither born nor does it dies, neither comes no goes, it exists ever as *the Prime Existence.* Therefore when every constituent element sees other constituent elements one's own likeness then the other constituent elements will also see their reflection in every other constituent element, leaving nothing to liked or disliked, loved or despised. One becomes the mirror for others as others become the mirrors for one. The seeing and the seen become instantly one with another, causing neither love nor revulsion for the other and each one and other accept each other as manifest effulgence of the same source. If one is irritated by every rub, how can the mirror be polished ? Therefore, *Isha Up.* says, 'यस्तु सर्वाणि भूतानि आत्मन्येवानुपश्यति | सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं ततो न विजुगुप्सते ||. .' and 'यस्मिन्सर्वाणि भूतानि आत्मैवाभूद्विजानतः | तत्र को मोहः कः शोकः एकत्वमनुपश्यतः ||' in which case every thing in the world, the *form* and the *essence*, is enveloped by the *supreme Lord* and as consequence everything belongs to the Lord and not to any constituents in the world, then ther would benothing with which one would not feel be disturbed. 'न विजुगुप्सते' is not feeling revulsion in contradiction to feeling attracted. 'न विजुगुप्सते' means doe not becomes disturbed, seeing every thing in the world both the positive and negative forces are same, even as the clouds and the Sun are verily the effulgence of *Brahman*.

In the language of *Zen Buddhishsm, Brahman* is some thing like mind '*The mirror is thoroughly egoless and mindless If a flower comes, it reflects a flower, if a bird comes it reflects a bird. It shows a beautiful object as beautiful, an ugly object as ugly. So everything is revealed as it is. There is no discriminating mind or self consciousness on the part of the mirror. If something comes, the mirror reflects; if it disappears the mirror just lets it disappear... no traces of anything are left behind*'. *Brahman* is whatever is manifest as galaxies and solar systems appearing and disappearing, continents disintegrated and again integrated in new forms, mountains, hills and dales, tress, plants and vegetation, seasons changing and transforming, old givlng way to new, life evolving with fish that swim in waters, reptiles that crawl on earth, birds that fly in the sky, giant tyrannosaurus and dinosaurs roaming around giving place to small reptiles, animal world transforming as apes as homo-sapiens. Similarly *Brahman*

is the intellect, mind, breath, sight, hearing, earth, water air, space, luminous as well absence of luminosity, desire and absence of desire, fear, anger and absence of anger, righteousness and absence of righteousness, compassion as well as chastisement 'स वा अयमात्मा व्रह्म विज्ञानमयो मनोमयः प्राणमयश्चक्षुर्मयः श्रोत्रमयः पृथिवीमय आपोमयो वायुमय आकाशमयस्तेजोमयोऽतोजोमयः काममयोऽकाममयः क्रोधमयोऽक्रोधमयो धर्ममयोऽधर्ममयः सवमयस्तयस्तद्यदेतदिदमयोदोमय इति |'. *I-sense*, birth and death being only integration and disintegration of the gross *forms* of the eight-fold division of his प्रकृति 'प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय विसृजामि पुनः पुनः | भूतग्रामिमं कृत्स्नमवशं प्रकृतेर्वशात्||'.

Vedic philosophy does not, as *Judaic* philosophy does, countenance any countervailing power, independent of or other than the *Purusha*, bargaining and setting terms with God, in influencing and shaping the destiny of the human kind. *Vedic* scriptures proposed That One तदएकम्, *Brihad Aranyak Up.* declaring that 'नैवेह किंचनाग्र आसीत्', 'आत्मैवेदमग्र आसीत्पुरुप विधः'. 'स वा अयं पुरुषः सर्वासु पुर्षु पुरिशयः, नैनेन किंचनानावृतम्, नैनेन किंचनासंवृतम्|' Where there is duality of perception there one smells .. sees .. hears .. speaks .. thinks .. understands the other but Where, verily, everything has become the Self, then by what and by whom should one smell .. see .. hear .. speak .. think .. understand another - 'यत्र द्वेतमिव भावति तदितर इतरं जिघ्रति, तदितर इतरं पश्यति, तदितर इतरं श्रुणोति, तदितर इतरमभिवदति, तदितर इतरं मनुते, तदितर इतरं विजानाति ; यत्र वा अस्य सर्वमात्मैवाभूत्तत्केन कं जिघ्रेत्, तत्केन कं पश्येत्, तत्केन कं श्रुणुयात्, तत्केन कमभिवदेत्, तत्केन कं मन्वीत, तत्केन कं विजानीयत्? येनेदं सर्वं विजानाति तं केन विजानियात्? विज्ञातारमरे केन विजानीयादिति ||'. The supreme Lord is said to be सर्वज्ञ, all knower and by that reasoning one is said to be a सर्वज्ञ who knows everything. But this meaning is partial and not full. सर्वज्ञ is he who has the *Wisdom* that there is nothing to be known and not to be known, every things being two aspects of *the Prime Existence* which eternal existence. *Knowledge* is therefore partial and fragmentary, therefore, what ever one knows of the supreme *divine essence* is partial and fragmentary. It is *Wisdom* that is being established in the supreme *divine essence,* fully and wholly and in entirety.

The supreme *divine essence* is no other than *the undifferentiated Prime Existence* सत्य, which one becomes consciously aware is silence, where there is no duality of empirical experiences, thoughts, speech and action. In pure experience there is no division, difference and diversions. When one thinks of some things. speaks of some things, and actions in pursuance of the things, thought and spoken, there arises diversions, division and difference. When two persons are in silent meditation then there are no thoughts, speech and action, therefore, no diversions, division and difference about *the Prime Existence* सत्य, the *divine will* - ऋत, *the Cosmic Law*, and धर्म - *the righteous principles* and यज्ञ, *the Sacrifice* as the creative activity. *The Prime Existence* is the inexplicable and unexplainable, therefore, expression becoming impossible because expression is the result of the empirical influences. It can only be suggested, knowing well that all expressions return without achieving the intent and purpose fully.

For such one Sunshine is common to all creation illuminating every thing but not being illuminated by them - 'यथाकाशस्थितो नित्यं वायुः सर्वत्रगो महान्| तथा सर्वाणि भूतानि मत्स्थानीत्युपधारय ||', luminosity streaming through even every window and touching every one dwelling within 'यथा प्रकाशयत्येकः कृत्स्नं लोकमिमं रविः | क्षेत्रं क्षेत्री तथा प्रकाशयेत भारत ||', equally on all, no one despised or fovoured - 'समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु न मे द्वेष्योऽस्ति न प्रियः |'. In truth, when Sun shines one does see neither the Sun nor the luminous light but only the *forms* and *images* which Sun illumines, the radiating resplendent rays blocking the sight that sees the Sun. Therefore, one is dazzled only by the resplendent forms and the radiating resplendent rays which illumine resplendent forms. *Atharvavedic* seer, therefore, avers that God belongs to all, the resident as well as the foreigner - 'यः संदेश्यो वरुणो यो विदेश्यः |'. *Varuna,* verily, belongs to our land as well to the foreign lands, thus the seeker prays for his pardon, if he has offended any one - brother, friend, neighbour or a foreigner 'अर्यम्यं वरुणं मित्रयं वा सखायं वा सदमिद्भ्रातरएं वा | वेशं वा नित्यं वरुणारणं वा यत्सीमागश्चकृमा शिश्रयस्तत्||', with words like the *vedic* wisdom open for all 'यथेमां वाचं कल्याणीं आवदानि जनेभ्यः | ब्रह्मराजन्याभ्यां शूद्राय चार्याय स्वाय च चारणाय च ||'.

Creation having been in existence even before the *divine essence* is born as eternal soul, drawing to itself the elements together with mind, intellect and *I-sense,* birth and death is occasioned later without the *self* being taken in to consideration. Even then the *I-sense* appropriates or attempts to

appropriate the possessions which belong not to the eternal soul but to the *supreme Lord* alone. In fact nothing belongs to the individual self, though he appropriates the same as belonging to him, neither love nor hate, neither pleasures nor pains neither compassion nor anger all having come out of the प्रकृति, 'प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि कर्माणि सर्वशः | अहङ्कारविमूढात्मा कर्ताहमिति मन्यते ||'. As *Sri Aurobindo* explains, '*All existence is a manifestation of God because He is the only Existence and nothing can be except as a part or veiled either a real figuring or else a figment of one reality. Therefore every conscious being is in part or in some way a descent of the Infinite into an apparent finiteness of name and form. But it is a veiled manifestation and there is a gradation between the supreme being of the Divine and the consciousness shrouded partly or wholly by ignorance of self in the finite. The inner divinity is the eternal Avatara in man; the human manifestation is its sign and development in the external world*'.

Having manifested as creation, *Brahman* provides ऋत, धर्म and यज्ञ for preservation, maintenance, regulation of the *World Order.* ऋत is the inexorable and unavoidable *comic law* for fulfilling the *divine intent* and *purpose.* No none transgress the *cosmic law* save at the peril of the person violating it, whether he be देव, असुर or मानुष, no one break it and be saved. *Varuna* is the presiding deity, born of *Cosmic Law*, true to *Cosmic Law*, enricher of *Cosmic Law* and intense hater of the false - 'ऋतवान ऋतजाता ऋतावृद्धो घोगसां अनृतद्विपः', appointed to supervise, maintain, guide, regulate and discipline the constituents in performing their actions in the manifest universe. It was *Varuna* who knows the paths through which birds fly and ships sail - 'वेद यां वीनां पदमन्तरिक्षेण पतनतामवेद नावः समुद्रियः |', who made the pathway spacious for *Surya* to traverse 'उरुं हि राजा वरुणश्चकार सूर्याय पन्थामन्वेता उ |', for streams to flow to the ocean - 'रदत्पथो वरुणः सूर्याय प्राणांसि समुद्रियानदीनाम्|', fixing the ordinances for moon and stars to traverse along their appointed route, keeping heaven and earth asunder, urging the high and mighty in the high sky and the ancient stars to movement, stabilizing the year, month, day and night; sacrifices and the hymns 'वि ये दधुः शरदं मासमादहर्यज्ञमक्तु चादृचम्|. He oversees the world being well formed and fashioning, supervising the observance of the law 'परि स्पशो वरुणस्यस्मदिष्टा उभे पश्यन्ति रोदसी सुमेके | ऋतवान कवयो यज्ञधीराः प्रचेतसो य दूयन्त मन्म ||'. In the whole design the individual *will* becomes the instrument initiated and promoted for fulfillment of the *divine intent* and *purpose.*

Brahman becomes increasingly visible as the sustainer regulator of the ऋत of the faithful and the chastiser of the fraudulent. The enlightened seer who was completely attuned to the *cosmic law*, therefore, spelt out in *Chhandogya Up*. the injunctions ordained under ऋत to be observed by every one in creation, both animate and inanimate, but most assuredly by humans as the most conscious with sense of discrimination. महामनाः स्यात्तद्व्रतम् - one should be great and generous minded, one should not eat or spit in fire, one should not despise women, one should not decry sweltering Sun, one should not decry when it rains, one should not decry the seasons, one should not decry the worlds, one should not decry the animals, one should not eat flesh for a year or eat not at all, one should not decry a man of wisdom, *All this, verily, is Brahman*, thus one should meditate, that is the injunction; that is the injunction - न प्रत्यङ्ङग्निमाचामेन्न निष्ठीवेत्तद्व्रतम्, न कञ्चन परिहरेत्तद्व्रतम्, तपन्तं न निन्देत्तद्व्रतम्, वर्षन्तं न निन्देत्तद्व्रतम्, ऋतून्न निन्देत्तद्व्रतम्, लोकान्न निन्देत्तद्व्रतम्, पशून्न निन्देत्तद्व्रतम्, संवत्सरं मज्ज्ञो नाश्नीयात्तद्व्रतं मज्ज्ञो नाश्नीयादिति वा, ब्राह्मणान्न निन्देत्तद्व्रतम्, सर्वमस्मीत्युपासीत तद्व्रतमतद्व्रतम्'.

An enlightened person, being receptive to the *Divine intent* and *purpose*, though not explicitly perceptible, observes the interplay of the forces operating in *Nature* as powerful energy centres of his thoughts expressed and not expressed. The modern science touches this aspect of the cosmic law superficially on the surface, having observed with concern the vast ecological and social imbalance observed externally in the *gross* Nature through organs of senses and deduced through intellect, but scarcely conscious and taking cognizance of the imbalance caused internally in the ethical, moral and the spiritual standards, hardly attempting even to reach the *subtle* Nature. It is only some receptive and sensitive scientists are seen to touch hesitatingly hem of the garment and not yet exult with decisive warmth.

धर्म is the foundational principles which assumes completely different connotation than what is

understood in common parlance, where it is equated with religion. धर्म is defined as that which supports 'धरति लोकऽनेन धरति लोकं वा धरति विश्वं इति धरति लोकान्धीयते वा जनैर इति ||' (*Amarkosha*). *Bhatruhari* says the sole distinguishing feature between human and animals and all other attributes and inclinations like love and hate, desire, hunger and fear being more or less the same, 'धर्मो हि तेषामधिको विशेषः धर्मेण हीनाः पशुभिः समानः |', *Mahabharata* explaining it as 'धारणाद्धर्म इत्याहुः धर्मो धारयते प्रजाः | यत्स्याद धारणसंयुक्तं स धर्म इति निश्चयः ||'. Therefore, it is repeatedly emphasized that 'वेदः स्मृतः सदाचारः स्वस्य च प्रियमात्मनः | एतच्चतुर्विधं प्राहुः साक्षाद्धर्मस्य लक्षणम्||' and 'वेदोक्तः परमो धर्मः स्मृतिशास्त्रगतोऽपरः | शिष्टाचार्यः परः प्रोक्तस्त्रयो धर्मः सनातनः ||'. धर्म is also considered best of the three human aspirations 'धर्मश्चार्थश्च कामश्च धर्म एवोत्तरो भवेत्| अस्मिन्लोके परे चैव धर्मवित्सुखमेधते ||'. Final observation comes from *Bhishma* 'एष मे सर्व धर्माणां धर्मधिकतमो मतः | यद्भक्त्या पुण्डरीकाक्षम्स्तवैरर्चेन्नरः सदा ||'. धर्म came to be classified in ten forms as 'कीर्तिर्लक्ष्मिर्धृतिर्मेधा पुष्टिः श्रद्धा क्रिया तथा | बुद्धिर्लज्जा मतिश्चैव पत्न्यो धर्मस्य ता दश ||', though the word came later to be accepted in temporal context also righteous prescription as महाव्रत*s* for ethical and moral conduct.

In *Mahabharata* the words comes to be used in many sense as discipline as गुणधर्म कुलधर्म आचारधर्म वर्णधर्म ब्राह्मणधर्म वर्णाश्रमधर्म etc. suggesting the vast scope of the word. धर्म primarily emphasize absence of hate and greed, compassion of creatures, restraint and austerity, living life as seeker of *Brahman* eager for *the Prime Existence*, charity, uprightness, 'अद्रोहश्चाप्यलोभश्च दमो भूतदया तपः | ब्रह्मचर्यं ततः सत्यमनुक्रोशः क्षमा धृतिः | सनातनस्य धर्मस्य मूलमेतद्दुरासदम्||' knowing well that performance of धर्म changes according to the *yuga*, 'अन्ये कृतयुगे धर्मास्त्रेतायां द्वापरेऽपरे | अन्ये कलियुगे नृणां युगह्रासानुरूपतः ||'. Therefore it is also suggested that in every *yuga* धर्म becomes reduced in strength losing one by one measure 'कृते चतुष्पात्सकलो निर्व्याजोपाधिवार्जितः | वृषः प्रतिष्ठितो धर्मो मनुष्येष्वं भरतर्षभ || अधर्मपादविद्धस्तु त्रिभिरंशैः प्रतिष्ठितः | त्रेतायां द्वापरेऽर्धेन व्यामिश्रो धर्म उच्यते || त्रिभिरंशैरधर्मस्तु लोकानाक्रम्य तिष्ठति | तामसं युगमासाद्य तदा भरतसत्तम ||'.

धर्म was seen having overriding influence differently to different people with different attributes (गुण) and inclinations (स्वभाव). *Krishna* tells *Uttanak Bhargava* that धर्म is born from his mind therefore he dwells amongst those who are ever righteous and for protection of धर्म he takes birth in human and animals, in animate and inanimate wombs performing acts suitable to those forms 'मम विद्धि सुतं धर्ममग्रजं द्विजसत्तम || मानसं दयितं विप्र सर्वभूतदयात्मकाम्| तत्राहं वर्तमानैश्च निवृत्तैश्चैव मानवैः || बह्वीः संसरमाणो वै योनिवर्तामि सत्तम | धर्मसंरक्षणार्थाय धर्मसंस्थापनाय च || तैस्तैर्वेषैश्च रूपैश्च त्रिषु लोकेषु भार्गव ||'. *Yudhishthira* tells *Draupadi* that he follows धर्म without expecting fruits but because it is his गुण and स्वभाव are set on धर्म - 'नाहं धर्मफलान्वेशी राजपुत्रि चराम्युत | धर्म एव मनः कृष्णे स्वभावाच्चैव मे धृतम्||', though unreservedly admitting that since it is difficult to evaluate धर्म one should follow the course adopted by the wise ones - 'तर्कोऽप्रतिष्ठः श्रुतयो विभिन्न नैको मुनिर यस्यवाचः प्रमाणं | धर्मस्य तत्वं निहितं गुहायां महाजनो येन गतः स पन्थाः ||'. *Duryodhana* on the other hand with his mind influenced and obscured by sense-organs responds that though he knows what धर्म is, he is not inclined to follow, and though he knows what अधर्म is, he is not averse to follow same, justifying in the process that he performs actions as the divine principle within prompts him 'जानामि धर्मं न च मे प्रवृत्तिः जानाम्यधर्मं न च मे निवृत्तिः | केनापि देवेन हृदि स्थितेन यतहा नियुक्तो तथा करोमि ||'.

Lord is not inconsiderate but kind and compassionate providing the means and the goal, the practice and the purpose along with creation. *Katha Up* says that bot the the proper and the plasant come before a person; the wise one chooses the proper using his sense of discrimination while ignorant chooses the pleasant under the influence of senses 'श्रेयश्च प्रेयश्च मनुष्यमेतस्तौ सम्परीत्य विविनक्ति धीरः | श्रेयो हि धीरोऽभि प्रेयसो वृणीते प्रेयो मन्दो योगक्षेमात्वृणीते ||'. Scriptures, says *Shankara*, are devote the means of attaining what is proper and avaoiding what is pleasant in so far as there are no visble or inferable indicators 'सर्वोऽप्ययं वेदः प्रत्यक्षनुमानाभ्यां अनवगतेष्टानिष्टप्राप्तिपरिहारोपायप्रकाशनपरः स्त्रीपुरुषाणां निसर्गत एव तत्प्राप्तिपरिहारयोरनिष्टत्वात्||'.

यज्ञ and कर्म are for the maintenance of the world order. यज्ञ is performance of action in consonance with the *divine intent* and *purpose*, देवतानामयत्कार्यम् , a concept which goes back to *Rigvedic times* where *creation* is described as विश्वयज्ञ, universal sacrifice performed by gods for fulfilling the *divine intent* and *purpose* in which *Purusha* became the first oblation or the instrument for establishing धर्म the first perennial principles along with others in the high heavens - 'यज्ञेन यज्ञमयजन्त देवास्तानि धर्माणि प्रथमान्यासान्| ते ह नाकं महिमानः सचन्त यत्र पूर्वे साध्याः सन्ति देवाः ||' where *Purusha* became the metaphor for seeker to offer one's wisdom (ब्रह्मतेज), strength (क्षत्रतेज), enterprise (विशय or वैश्यतेज) and service (दास्यभाव) at the altar of the *divine essence*,

as प्रार्थना acknowledgement of the ordained things received than as याचना, craving for things which one does not have and craves to possess. प्रार्थना becomes transformed as शरणागति when one offers his wisdom (ब्रह्मतेज), strength (क्षत्रतेज), enterprise (विशय or वैश्यतेज) and service (दास्यभाव), as *Krishna* desires *Arjuna* to surrender to him 'मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु | मामेवैष्यसि युक्त्वैवमात्मानं मत्परायणः...सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्या मामेकं शरण व्रज | अहं त्वा सर्व पापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ||'.

According to *Athervaveda* the supreme *Prime Existence,* stern *Cosmic Law*, initiation, austerity, wisdom and performance of actions as and by way of यज्ञ up hold the worlds. May those worlds, the regulator of the past and future makes our opportunities wide open 'सत्यं बृहदृतं उग्रं दीक्षा तपो ब्रह्म यज्ञः पृथिवीं धारयन्ति | सा नो भूतस्य भव्यस्य पत्न्युरुं लोकं पृथिवीं नः कृणोतु ||'. *Yajurveda* declared, 'व्रतेन दीक्षां आप्नोति, दीक्षयाप्नोति दक्षिणाम् | दक्षिणा श्रद्धां आप्नोति, श्रद्धया सत्यं आप्यते ||' - it is through self-discipline that one attains consecration; through consecration one attains benevolence, through benevolence one becomes receptive and through receptivity does the *Primal Existence* become luminous.

Shatapatha Brahmana enjoins यज्ञ through performance of action and wisdom - 'विद्यया वा कर्मणा वा'. अश्वमेध यज्ञ being the supreme of all यज्ञs, sacrificial horse becomes the symbol of cosmic scope for power, force and energy for spiritual enlightenment. *Shankara* says that since the relative creation with neither beginning nor end, like the seed and the sprout, is the result of ignorance and superimposed by actions and the consequential fruits the wisdom concerning अश्वमेध यज्ञ is recommended for removal of the ignorance. As generation elapsed, यज्ञ assumed a comprehensive climax elevated to the status of the supreme *Brahman*, यज्ञो वै विष्णुः being superimposed on *Prajapati* even as *Vishnu* is superimposed on the image 'प्राजपत्यत्वं च प्रजपतिदृष्ट्यध्यारोपणात्| काललोकदेवतात्वाध्यारोपणा च प्राजपतित्वकरणं पशोः | एवं रूपो हि प्राजपतिः | विष्णुत्वादिकरणमिव प्रतिमादौ ||'.

सत्य, *the Prime Existence,* the *supreme divine essence* which existed in the past, exists in present and also in the future. The past lost in the bowels of the past, future being still uncertain, it is only in the present moment that one can hope to be aware of *The Prime Existence* in the circumstances and context, which is rational and relevant to the consciousness of the present generation. *The Prime Existence* is like the vast ocean on which Gods become effulgent like waves dashing on the shore with energy as the *form* and *essence* or like the vast space where stars are luminous guiding the travelers on the righteous *Path*, each star becoming luminous for some time with various energy and intensity, only to vanish and lost in oblivion, some faintly recollected and remembered, some palpably luminous in the present and yet some not known evolving only in the future with brightness and resplendence for the chosen few.

If one desires to understand *Krishna* then it would have to entirety of his personality and not partially as *divine essence* without considering it reflected in the *gross form* or as the *gross form* partially without considering the *divine essence* established therein. In the beginning there was neither non-*Existence* nor *Existence; formless* or with *form*, there was neither air nor the sky beyond, *Death* did not exist nor was *Then* the night, without breathing, alone with *self-impulse* was *That One*, other than that, there was nothing else 'नासदासीन्नो सदासीत्तदानीं नासीद्रजो नो व्योमा परो यत्| किमावरीवः कुहकस्य शर्मन्नम्भः किमासीद्गहनम्|| न मृत्युरासीदमृतं न तर्हि न रात्र्या अह्न आसीत् प्रकेतः | आनीदवातं स्वधया तदेकं तस्माद्धान्यन्न परः किं चनास ||'. The animate and inanimate creation existed as *essence*, potency before it became the potential in world in diverse *forms*, in eight-fold divisions, the five elements earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect and the *I-sense* all following each other sequentially. *If Krishna* is *Complete* and creation is also *Complete, Complete* having been evolved from the *Complete* then whatever exists in the world is also *Krishna*, enveloped by *Krishna* - 'अहं सर्वस्य प्रभवो मत्तः सर्वं प्रवर्तते | इति मत्वा भजन्ते मां बुधा भावसमन्विताः ||...विष्टभ्याहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत्||'.

If one desires to understand *Krishna* then it would have to be as the *Complete divine essence* conceptualized by *Isha Up.* who seeing no one else acknowledged as अहं *I*, अस्मि *Existence* and ब्रह्मन्-*Effulgence,* which is the eternal unmanifest beyond all unmanifest existence, 'अव्यक्तोऽव्यक्तात्सनातनः', which does not perish even after all manifestations perish 'यः स सर्वेषु भूतेषु नश्यत्सु न विनश्यति'. Enlarging the concept

Brihad Aranyak Up. says 'स वा अयं पुरुषः सर्वासु पुर्षु पुरिशयः : येनेन किंचनानावृतम्, नैनेन किंचनासंवृतम्||'. Explaining further the *Up.* says that when one is born, it is not *the one* who is born but it is *Brahman*, the *Wisdom, Bliss, Brahman* and final goal that is born in the *gross form* for who could else create the unborn 'जत एव; न, जायते, कोन्वेनं जनयेत्पुनः || विज्ञानमानन्द ब्रह्म, रातिर्दातुः परायणम्, तिष्ठमानस्य तद्विद इति ||'?

Krishna represents the state prior to its being differentiated as नाम and रूप. Having created all and every thing in creation, he acknowledged that he himslef is the creation 'अहं वाव सृष्टिरस्मि, अहं हीदं सर्व मसृक्षीति'. As *Brahman*, प्रकृति is *Krishna* the eight-fold division designated as the earth, water, fire, air, space, mind, intellect and *I-sense*, 'भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च | अहङ्कार इतीयं मे भिन्न प्रकृतिरष्टधा ||' a fragment of his *divine essence* born in the world as eternal soul, drawing to itself the elements to create the *form* together with mind, intellect and *I-sense* thereafter 'ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः | मनःषष्ठानीन्द्रियाणि प्रकृतिस्थानि कर्षति ||'. Therefore, *devas, asuras, gandharvas, yaksas, nagas, raksasas*, the moving and non-moving beings, the sun, moon, stars, sky, directions, earth, oceans all exists sustained by the strength of *Krishna* along with all dualities and diversities 'न क्रोधो न च मात्सर्य न लोभो नाशुभा मतिः भवन्ति कृत पुण्यानां भक्तानां पुरुषोत्तमे द्यौ सचन्द्रका नक्षत्र खं दिशो भुरमहोदधिः वासुदेवस्य वीर्येण विधृतानि महात्मनः सुरासुर गन्धर्व स यक्षोरगा राक्षसं जगत् वशे वर्ततेदं कृष्णस्य सचराचरम्||'. That is the state in which *Krishna* dwells as the whole, complete and entirety of *Brahman*, a mirror on which every thought, speech and action becomes reflected. It is the empirical life with ones, thoughts, ideas, concepts and memories which vitiate and obscure the true face of *Brahman* being revealed. When one cleans the mirror the true face becomes reflected, not created, even as when the clouds conceal the face of the Sun and not create the Sun. Then one should accept whatever exists in the world as belonging to the supreme Lord and enjoy whatever is ordained for him in the spirit or renunciation - तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा and not coveting what is ordained for others, मा गृधः कस्य स्विद्धनम्. Only when one performs one's action in this manner that actions performed do not cause any consequences, 'एवं त्वयि नान्यथेतोऽस्ति न कर्म लिप्यते नरे ||'.

Krishna who was aware of his *divine essence* as one distinct and different, *Krishna* is the other which as the higher upholds the worlds 'अपरेयमितस्त्वन्यां प्रकृतिं विद्धि मे पराम्| जीवभूतां महाबाहो ययेदं धार्यते जगत्||' established in *forms* 'सर्वभूतानि कौन्तेय प्रकृतिं यान्ति मामिकाम्| कल्पक्षये पुनस्तानि कल्पादौ विसृजाम्यहम्||', 'मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना | मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः ||', 'गतिर्भर्ता प्रभुः साक्षी निवासः शरणं सुहृत्| प्रभवः प्रलयः स्थानं निधानं बीजमव्ययम्||', 'अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभूताशयस्थितः | अहमादिश्च मध्यं च भूतानामन्त एव च ||', 'कालोऽस्मि लोकक्षयकृत्प्रवृद्धो लोकान्समाहर्तुमिह प्रवृत्तः |' अविभक्तं च भूतेषु विभक्तमिव च स्थितम्| भूतभर्तृ च तज्ज्ञेयं ग्रसिष्णु प्रभविष्णु च ||', 'पितामहस्य जगतो माता धाता पितामहः |.. अहं हि सर्वयज्ञानां भोक्ता च प्रभुरेव च |' 'ईशा वास्यमिद सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत् |'. *Krishna* as *divine essence* is difficult to be experienced for the embodied beings, whose thoughts are set on the un-manifest, *Krishna* as *form* becomes helpful for accessing the same, as the other side of the same coin, understanding both sides together and complemented with each other. *Krishna's divine essence* being concealed in the *Krishna-form* and becoming revealed with disappearance of the *form, divine essence* referred as '*That*' and the *form* referred as '*This*', '*That*' is the seer, unheard but the hearer, unthought but the thinker, unknown but the knower. '*This*' is what is seen, what is heard, what is thought, and what is known, '*This*' not being different from '*That*', *Krishna's divine essence* being both the *essence* and the *form*. It is absolutely necessary for every serious student *Krishna-saga* to study, investigate both '*This*' and '*That*' together as comprehensive whole instead of finding whether '*This*', '*That*' is the real *Krishna* as embodiment of that *Prime Existence*, which the seer have spoken as the *supreme Divine Principle,* giving due concession to the words spoken and symbols used by them without restricting the language or the context without narrating in literal, lateral manner but in depth and profundity, depending upon people, place and period when it was communicated.

Bhagavat Purana declares that that *Krishna* exists singularly alone as the universe both in the beginning and the end, in the intermediate stage as well having become effulgent with energy and power माया, seeing and the other as distinct and different. The universe both is the *cause* and the *effect*, seen as same when it originates, when it becomes effulgent and when it becomes dissolved, even as a tree is identical with the seed and the seed is identical as the tree 'एकस्त्वमेव जगदेतदमुष्य यत्त्वमाद्यन्तयोः पृथगवस्यसि मध्यतश्च |

सृष्ट्वा गुणव्यतिकरं निजमाययेदं नानेव तैरसितस्तदनुप्रविष्टः || त्वं वा इदं सदसदीश भवांस्ततोऽन्यो माया यदात्मपरबुद्धिरियं ह्यपार्था | यद्यस्य जन्म निधनं स्थितिरीक्षणं चयद् वै तदेव वसुकालवदष्टितवार्पः ||'. The duality which one observes generally in samsara as well as what one superficially observes in *Krishna's* personality both good and bad, noble and ignoble, righteous and unrighteous, gods and *asuras* have the same source which one fonds detived from *Prajapati* being his effulgence - 'द्वया ह प्राजापत्याः देवाश्चासुराश्च |'. Therefore, it is suggested 'न तदस्ति क्वचित्राजन्यत्राहं न प्रतिष्ठितः | न च तद्विद्यते भूतं मयि यन्न प्रतिष्ठितम्|| यावन्मात्रं भवेद्भूतं स्थूलं सूक्ष्ममिदं जगत्| जीवभूतो ह्यहं तस्मिंस्तावन्मात्रं प्रतिष्ठितः || ...एवं सर्वं जगदिदं सदेवासुरमानुषम्| मत्तः प्रभवते रथजन् मय्येव प्रविलीयते ||' 'वेदाहं समतीतानि वर्तमानानि चार्जुन | भविष्याणि च भूतानि मां तु वेद न कश्चन ||', 'अन्तकाले च मामेव स्मरन्मुक्त्वा कलेवरम्| यः प्रयाति स मद्भावं याति नास्त्यत्र संशयः ||'. *Krishna* as the *form*, the image, symbol or metaphor with broad outlines delineated becomes useful for accessing *Krishna as the divine essence. Krishna's* empirical life therefore, is to be studied as one would study the *essence* (reflection) which one sees in the *body-form*, (the mirror). Therefore, he syntheises his *divine essence* for human cognition in gross pictographic forms like - 'आदित्यानामहं विष्णुः .. रुद्राणां शङ्करश्चास्मि .. वेदानां सामवेदोऽस्मि .. देवानामस्मि वासवः .. महर्षीणां भृगुरहं .. सिद्धानां कपिलो मुनिः .. इन्द्रियाणां मनश्चास्मि .. भूतानामस्मि चेतना .. मेरुः शिखरिणामहम् .. सरसामस्मि सागरः .. स्रोतसामस्मि जाह्नवी .. अश्वत्थः सर्ववृक्षाणां .. प्रह्लादश्चास्मि दैत्यानां .. अनन्तश्चास्मि नागानां .. मृत्युः सर्वहरश्चाहम्.. उद्भवश्च भविष्यताम्.. द्यूतं छलयतामस्मि .. दण्डो दमयतामस्मि .. वृष्णीनां वासुदेवोऽस्मि पाण्डवानां धनञ्जयः .. मुनीनामप्यहं व्यासः .. कवीनामुशना कविः .. यच्च सर्वभूतानां बीजं तदहमर्जुन | न तदस्ति विना यत्स्यान्मया भूतं चराचरम्||' with an important rider placed at the end -'नान्तोऽस्मि मम दिव्यानां विभूतीनां परंतप | एष तूद्देशतः प्रोक्तो विभूतेर्विस्तरो मया || यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्त्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा || अथवा बहुनैतेन किं ज्ञातेन तवार्जुन | विष्टभ्याहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत्||'.

It follows as logical surmise that even the *human form* which was born with five elements, together with mind, intellect and *I-sense* known as *Devakiputra Krishna,* whom creatures obscured by *I-sense* - अहङ्कारविमूढात्मा recognised as but a human being and whose reference one finds earliest in *Chhandogya Up.* and not earlier in *vedic* or other scriptures, who performs the acts of love and hate, pleasures and pains, compassion and anger, likes and dislikes later in *Dvapara yuga* is not the *supreme divine essence* but which represented through his thoughts, speech and actions in its totality, enveloping and pervading in all dimensions and directions the *supreme divine essence* in life, demonstrating new dimension of consciousness, imparting new understanding, a new perspective, a new vision, to the society, dark forces enveloping and obscuring the luminous forces, the ethical standards and moral codes, religions and philosophies, he cannot be understood. Krishna himself defined during his own existence in *human form* the goals and objectives; transforming desire bound actions to desire-less performance of action, changing beliefs and faiths to unconditional and unqualified receptivity, commitment and communion to an ideal far beyond empirical ideation and human goals, changing *knowledge* of the *vedic* scriptures to the enlightened *wisdom Veda*.

But those who are obscure to *Krishna's divine essence* draw their ignorance further over their eyes becoming disillusioned and despair. For them is not the singular luminous white Sunlight, auspicious and pure, but appearing as it passes though the prism of empirical sense-influenced life appearing as polarized in a spectrum of colours, splitting, dividing, separating things as positive and negative attributes, taking all the limitations of the finite, of the past, present or the future, as the good and bad, as the noble and ignoble, as the beautiful and ugly, as the pleasant and unpleasant, as the pleasure and pain, as the righteous and unrighteous. But to those who are awake to his comprehensive and universal *divine essence* will become enlightened and energized seeing *Krishna* as the all-pervading *Prime Existence* reflected in united and singular entirety of universal manifestation, without any duality or polarity, neither claiming any preference nor any precedence, all differences and distinctions of thoughts, speech and actions not as contradictory but as complementary.

Once the *Krishna-body-form* is distanced and accepted only as historical personality who performed great deeds *Krishna as the divine essence* becomes revealed, as reflection in the *body-form*. *Krishna* is made of two primary principles the external *mortal body* and the internal *immortal essence*. *Krishna body* is born and when death enters it ceases to be, but the *divine essence* within was neither

born nor ever ceased to be. Therefore what one intends to study is not the *Krishna-body-form* but *Krishna as the divine essence* the real meditation beginning when one becomes receptive to and reflects on the *Krishna as the divine essence* in the *Krishna-body-form.* All earlier *divine descents* were with specific intent and purpose either to preserve and uphold creation from complete annhillation as in the case of descents as fish and tortoise or to destroy the unrightepus forces as in the case of Boar, Man-lion, dwarf, *Parashurama.* The intent and purpose whioch became widened with the descent as *Dasharathi Rama* where as, मर्यादा पुरुषोत्तम the destruction of the unrighteous was coupled with exemplified moral and ethical standards in society and as *Krishna* he combined in his personality the destruction of the unrighteous as well as establishing righteopusness came as the पूर्णावतार, with multidimensional personality as a well respected warrior, statesman, counselloer, negotiator, friend, guide and philosopher, a thinker, a great teacher and great human being well respected not only on the three worlds but also in all the times to comes.

Krishna transformed many religious concepts and institutions which were till then prevalent giving new orientation to their essential meaning. वर्णाश्रम was transformed from the caste system to class system based on attributes (गुण) and actions performed (कर्म), the institution of यज्ञ from performance of elaborate sacrifices in which oblations are offered to gods and gifts to the priests presiding over the functions to actions without being attached to the fruits of action for the welfare of the worldorder. The mystical *vedic* wisdom which was confined to the cloistered few became accessible in simple forms and speech as भक्ति open to all 'समोऽहं सर्वभूतेपु न मे द्वेष्योऽस्ति न प्रियः | ये भजन्ति तु मां भक्त्या मयि ते तेषु चाप्यहम्||..यो यो यां यां तनुं भक्तः श्रद्धयार्चितुमिच्छति | तस्य तस्याचलां श्रद्धां तामेव विदधाम्यहम्||..पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रायच्छति | तदहं भक्त्युपहृतमश्नामि प्रयतात्मनः ||..मां हि पार्थ व्यपाश्रित्य येऽपि स्युः पापयोनयः || स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति मामिकाम्||'. He had seen even in his child hood the futility of offering oblations to *Indra* when they had neither cities not towns and the entire dependence of the cowherds of *Vraja* depended on the forests and the rivers around. He transformed the institution of यज्ञ from performance of elaborate sacrifices in which oblations are offered to gods and gifts to the priests presiding over the functions.

Krishna's role, therefore, is to be seen in this atmosphere where he dramatically reoriented the concept to sacrifice as performance of one's actions detached from the fruits to be had from such performance of actions and elevating one's wisdom, valour, enterprise and sense of service on the altar of the *divine foundation*, where *Brahman* becomes the offering, *Brahman* becomes the oblation, *Brahman* becomes the agency, in the *Brahman* which is the fire, becoming completely in communion with *Brahman*, which is the ultimate test of *Krishna's* endorsement for one to completely surrender with all sense and sensibility, attributes and inclination. For surely not the external gods but this who dwell within one's own self will help energizing one's resolve. Therefore, one should lift oneself by one's own *Self* and not degrade it; for one's own *Self* alone is the friend and one's *Self* alone is the enemy. When one having brought under one's control one's own *Self* becoming serene and attuned to the *Great Self*, one will not be affected by the dualities on the primordial world. Then, abandoning all desires one performs his actions freed from craving, shorn of *mineness* and *I-sense* he attains the supreme peace - 'विहाय कामान्यः सर्वान्पुमांश्चरेत निःस्पृहः | निर्मामो निरहङ्कारः स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ||'.

The exceesive dependenace of human intellegenece and ingenuity made poet *William Wordsworth* restless, saying :

'The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
The Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,

And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.--Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn'.

Knowledge does not make one aware of *Krishna*; it is *Wisdom* which reveals *Krishna* as luminous dawn reveals. *Knowledge* only destroys the obstructions, impediments to *Wisdom*, liberation being only a metaphor. Performance of actions does not dispel ignorance, only *Wisdom* does. *Vyasa* has used *Krishna* to show how undifferentiated *Prime Existence*, differentiated as *essence* and *form* is established in the *gross forms* and how the *gross forms* become enlightened to the *divine essence* partially as in many other cases and fully as in the case of *Krishna*. Therefore, *Krishna* needs to be studied as an important footmark 'तदेतत्पदनीयमस्य सर्वस्य यदयमात्मानेन ह्येतत्सर्वं वेद |' as *upanishads* declare and not as uncertain and confusing mediums through the mythical and lyrical accounts 'प्लवा ह्येते अदृढा यज्ञरूपा अष्टादशोक्तमवरं येषु कर्म | एतच्छ्रेयो येऽभिनन्दन्ति मूढा जरामृत्युं ते पुनरेवापि यन्ति ||'. They should be taken as indistinct indicators, just as branch of the tree to point out the moon, thus do men of *Wisdom* declare. Only he who has experienced mystery of *Brahman* can express the experience of *Brahman*. It is not necessary for one to go the east or west, south or the north in search of the *Self*, neither search in any quarters nor in any directions, neither by restraint of speech nor staying in forest, but only through restraint of senses, ceasing thought and intellect being enlightened to one's own *Self* within, says *Sanatsujatiya*. Those who do not address themselves to the *essence* but only the *form* in which it becomes expressed are the fools distressed with difficulties, who abiding in midst of ignorance, wise in their own esteem, thinking themselves to be learned, wander like blind ones lead by one who himself is blind as pointed out in *Mundaka Up*.

Therefore what is needed is to distance oneself from the gross to the subtle, from the form to the essence, from *Krishna's* temporal personality in his external life and be attuned to the *subtle spiritual experience* within. One then would see him transcending the limitations which प्रकृति has placed on him as really and truthfully as enlightened to his spiritual and metaphysical *divine essence*. One need not necessarily see him as one who as creator, preserver and destroyer, compassionate and generous to the meek and righteous ones, disciplinary and judgmental to the aggressive and the unrighteous has taken descent in human form but can as well be seen as one in whom *spiritual* credentials becoming increasingly established as the *divine essence* in him more luminous than many others as *Bhagavat Purana* declares 'ऋषयो मनवो देवा मनुपुत्रा महौजसः | कलाः सर्वे हरेरेव सप्रजापानायस्तथा || एते चांशकलाः पुंसः कृष्णस्तु भगवान्स्वयम्|'.

In the final analysis, it is the subtle *essence* and not the gross *form* that matters. Therefore, it is said that *Krishna* cannot be known through study, intellect or through much listening but only to him whom he chooses He reveals his true form 'नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन | यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यस्तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनूं स्वाम्||'. That became bane to the sentimental devotees and a challenge to the cynical intellectuals. The *Upanishads* point out that only when one meditates with five senses, together with mind and even the intellect standing still one attains the supreme goal 'यदा पञ्चावतिष्ठन्ते ज्ञानानि मनसा सह | बुद्धिश्च न विचेष्टते तामाहुः परमां गतिम्||'. That is the state where neither any object nor any form exists, energy flowing extensively and on all directions, encompassing all sides, mind becoming completely unmindful of the objects and *forms*. It is the sate when death means denial of the *I-sense* with all the thoughts, concepts, opinions and memories and memories which establish relationship of the self, the *subtle essence* with the body, the *gross form*.

Scriptures are codified ethno-cultural systems concerned with the temporal and spiritual issues, characterized as racial, social and cultural thoughts and integrity gathered, preserved and transmitted by orthodox and highly institutionalized gentry as a religion. It is concerned with subjective reality not concerned with objective reality. They attempt to express the supra-sensory experiences of the seers in the medium which is empirical in content and temporal in context. As mythology they deal with symbols not with history. The gods. mythical symbols are designed to be the objective instruments, medium which have a psychological existence becoming helpful. can be used. Therefore unless one goes into and becomes one with the psyche of the religion, one would find it difficult to appreciate and understand the poetic imagery and vivid lyrical description represented by the symbols, signs and metaphors used thereon or the mystery and mysticism contained in the scriptures. As clarified by *Shankara,* scriptures set forth the means of attaining what is meritorious and avoiding what is not "ज्ञापकं हि शास्त्रं न तु कारकमिति स्थितिः श्रुतिश्च नः प्रमाणं अतीन्द्रियविषयविज्ञानोत्पत्तौ. शास्त्रादिदमेव भवति इदं इष्टसाधनं इदं अनिष्टसाधनं.'.

When the *I-sense* is denied with all Knowlede which is nothing else the aggregation of the thoughts, concepts, opinions and memories and memories the mind becomes silent and receptive. There is much that can be experienced in silence than spoken through words. That is the state which *Nachiketa* becomes endowed with when he sees his father giving in charity 'पीतोदका जग्धतृणा दुग्धदोहा निरिन्द्रियाः | अनन्दा नाम ते लोकास्तान्स गच्छति ता ददत्||' - the cows incapable of drinking water, tasting grass or giving milk or of strength (were the cows). Whoever gives such gifts; joyless would the worlds where he goes. श्रद्धाविवेश means receptivity enters. *Shankara* clarifies that though it is generally assumed that meaning becomes clear through knowledge of scriptures and reasoning, the mind which is encumbered by external knowledge needs to be receptive to be enlightened of the true wisdom. Only when श्रद्धा enters the mind that it becomes composed on the object to be understood, whereupon comprehension of the true meaning follows 'यद्यपि न्यायागमाभ्यां निर्धारितोऽयमर्थस्तथैवगम्यते, तथाप्यत्यन्तसूक्ष्मेष्वर्थेषु बाह्यविषयासक्तमनसः श्रद्धायां तु सत्यां मनसः समाधानं बुभुत्सितेर्थे भवेत्तश्च तदार्थवगतिः ||'.

It is only in the silent moments that सत्य, *the Prime Existence* comes to be revealed and not by speaking about, not by thinking, not by hearing, but by one whom *the Prime Existence* itself chooses to reveal its *essence* and *form.* Not by speech, not by mind, not by sight can he be apprehended, except saying *He exists.* When thoughts do not clarify, the speech does not specify and actions do not demonstrate, it is in the pause in between the thoughts, speech and actions that सत्य, *the Prime Existence* becomes revealed.

Vyasa, Vaishampayana, Suta or other select few were not the only persons receptive to the *Krishna* saga there being many more who have remained silent not speaking of their experiences. While what they express is only what they themselves have experienced, experiences of others are not available for one for scrutiny. So whatsoever is spoken by them can be understood in two ways, either accepting as authoritative statement or listening to them, trying to understand and then come to one's own conclusions. They may be the same or they may not be. They can never be exactly the same because persons, place and periods are different. So one's conclusions should not be and need not be your conclusions.

The study of *Krishna's* comprehensive *divinity* concealed therein, therefore, would not be revealed if one does not accept and understand the symbolism which *Vyasa* uses. In scripture, events and incidents are not important in themselves, because they suggest less of events and incidents and more as symbols, suggestions and indications. Events and incidents therefore need not be factual, it is sufficient if they indicate or suggest some significance or meaning behind the events and incidents. *Krishna* is relevant because he suggests and represents the *divine essence*, as the common denominator. All these are important if understood in the right spirit and in right context. They are important as important as they end up reveal. *Vaasa's* genius has empowered one to see the same manifestly expressed as सत्, *the Prime Existence.*

The unenlightened, obscure and ignorant approach *Krishna* without understanding this primary manner of presentation, accepting his performance of actions, as something anomalous, inane, frivolous, childish or ridiculous will not only not understand but will be completely confused by his माया, the formative power. *Krishna's* multi-dimensional role in life cannot be known and understood by seeking him in fragments but observed as oil in sesame seeds, as butter in cream, as water in riverbeds, as fire in wood, both as the container and as the contained, and both as the transient and as the eternal. The container is transient, as some thing that did not exist in the past, as some thing perceived as existing in the present and as some thing that would not exist in the future. The contained is eternal, as some thing that did exist in the past, as some thing experienced as existing in the present and as some thing that would exist even in the future.

An enlightened person, being receptive to the *Divine intent* and *purpose,* though not explicitly perceptible, observes the interplay of the forces operating in *Nature* as powerful energy centres of thoughts expressed and not expressed, as obscured from the skeptics and reveled to the receptive ones. The modern science touches this aspect of the *cosmic law* superficially on the surface, having observed with concern the vast ecological and social imbalance observed externally in the *gross* Nature through organs of senses and deduced through intellect, as great eternal movement in cyclic form, neither coming nor going, the seeds grow and they fall, and again grow and again fall, like the lufe that is born and dies, born and dies in repeated succession, birth and death being just a repeated and endless transformation. Sun dawns in the morning and sets in the evening, again to rise the next morning only to set in the evening. Seasons come and seasons go, rains following the summer, the winter following the rains. The earth moves, the stars move and also the planets in the firmament move, some die and new one are born. Man is scarcely conscious of this external movement and imbalance let alone the internal movements and imbalance in the ethical, moral and the spiritual standards, hardly attempting even to reach the *subtle* Nature. It is only some receptive and sensitive scientists are seen to touch hesitatingly hem of the garment and not yet exult with decisive warmth.

Spinoza, the western philosopher warned, that 'whenever anything in nature appears to us as ridiculous, absurd or evil, it is because we have but partial knowledge of things, and are in the main ignorant of the order and coherence of the Nature as a whole, and because . . . we want everything to be arranged according to the dictates of our own reason ; although in fact, what our reason pronounces bad is not bad as regards the Order or Laws, of universal nature . . . one and the same can be good, evil or indifferent. For example, music is good for melancholy, bad to the mourners and indifferent to the dead' and cautioned *'I would warn you that I do not attribute to nature either beauty or deformity, order and confusion. Only in relation to our imagination can things be called beautiful or ugly, well-ordered or confused'.*

In *Mahabharata*, therefore, *Vyasa* laid down the events not only those relating to *Krishna* but also to those relating to others, saying *this is the life, accept it as the whole and not in fragments*. One cannot traverse the path laid down by him, being distracted, confused and bewildered by the events as pleasant or unpleasant, as proper and as improper. One has to give up doubts, skepticism and cynicism about the veracity of the events, veracity of the interpretation without wandering on the periphery and concentrating on the unessential themes. Only those will experience the grandeur of the *Himalayas* who do not hesitate to climb the heights, undistracted by the thorns and stones, 'तेन धीग अपियन्ति वास्मविदः स्वर्गे लोकमित ऊर्ध्वे विमुक्ताः ||'.

Krishna is the *form* (रूप) in which the effulgence of *divine essence* (नाम) was seen resplendent in all its comprehensive attributes and inclinations, which he was consciously aware making him declare 'अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभूताशयस्थितः | अहमादिश्च मध्यं च भूतानामन्तमेव च ||' encompassing the world like the hills around and like the sky with the endless clouds wandering above, without beginning and without end. Remaining, abiding he is always there. Therefore, whenever the question arises of *Krishna* being the ultimate, the

supreme, the innermost, the very foundation of every thing, it becomes difficult where to begin and where to end because *Krishna* is always there with his palpable presence and will always be there. There has never been a beginning for *Krishna* and there will never be any end for him.

Therefore, unless one reflects and meditates on *Krishna-form* as representing *Brahman, Devakiputra, Krishna* would not be accessible as the comprehensive *prime Principle, the Prime Existence, and Brahman.* Therefore, whatever exists in the three worlds, auspicious and inauspicious, animate and inanimate, the past, present and future, as the breath in every creature which breathes even coming down as *Death* at the end of the *Time,* all that should be understood as having streamed from fragments of *Keshava's* inestimable splendour should all be accepted as *Krishna's* effulgence 'शुभाशुभं स्थावरं जङ्गम्म च विष्वक्सेनात्सर्वमेतत्प्रातीहि | यद्वर्तते यच्च भविष्यतीह सर्वं ह्येनत्केशवं त्वं प्रतीहि || मृत्युश्चैव प्रणिमानन्तकाले साक्षात् कृष्णः शाश्वतो धर्म वाहः | भूतं च यच्चेह न विदम किंचिद्विष्वक्से त्सर्वमेतत्प्रतीहि || यत्प्रशस्तं च लोकेषु पुण्यं यच्च शुभाशुभम्| तत्सर्वं केशवोऽचिन्त्यो विपरीता मतः परम्||'. To think otherwise, would be contrary to all intelligence. *Krishna* then becomes the comprehensive symbol, the model for the *divine essence* to be established in *Prakriti* as some thing other than the known and beyond the unknown, making earth, water, air, ether, light and absence of light, desire and absence of desires, anger and absence of anger, righteousness and absence of righteousness and every thing as primarily a *Brahman* perceived and inferred, 'स वा अयमात्मा ब्रह्म विज्ञानमयो मनोम्यः प्राणमयश्चक्षुर्मयः श्रोत्रमयः पृथिवीमय आपोमयो वायुमय आकाशनयस्तेजोमयोऽतेजोमयः काममयेऽकाममयः कोधमयोऽकोधमयो धर्ममयोऽधर्ममयः सर्वमयस्तद्यदेतदिदमयोऽदमय इति |'.

Having established himself in *Prakriti,* 'प्रकृतीं स्वामधिष्ठाय', he descends as earthquakes, pouring rains and shedding warmth of the Sun, the seeds sprouting in plants, plants becoming trees and trees producing seeds and thus turning the cycle again; shaking the earth, volcanoes spewing molten rocks, tempests blowing across the oceans, rains lashing out in floods, rivers inundating the banks, accepting the love and compassion, non-violence and mercy, no one complaining or demanding explanations, even as one would accept all the acts and events flowing from the divine, luminous ordainer, guide and supervisor in operation wholly, completely and in entirety, unequivocally, unambiguously and undeniably.

Krishna is, therefore, both good and the bad, noble and the ignoble, pleasant and the unpleasant without there being in *Krishna's* thoughts, speech and actions any seemingly contradictory attributes and inclinations all being his *effulgence* as clarified in *Bhagavad Gita,* 'यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्त्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा | तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तोजोंऽशसम्भवम्||'. In the background loomed large ऋत the *cosmic law* guiding and directing, coalescing and separating, not limited by period, place or by human beings, who in evolution of the entire manifestation, animate and inanimate, is but infinitely small speck, all composed of the elements - earth, water, fire, air and ether and some endowed with mind, intellect and self-sense.

Krishna is the luminously divine rain-bow with seven colours, all merged in one black colour, where black does not become the negative factor but the positive one, the symphony in which all variegated shades of colours and hues, made up of words and changing moods as *seasons* change, luminous light mingling with the awesome dark shades become assimilated and integrated, giving them all one supremely singular and yet undecipherable form, shape and character, existing with seeming distinct and independent personality, not belonging to no one or owing nothing to one or the other. *Krishna* should be understood with his thoughts, speech and actions as but the actions of *Brahman* - 'तान्यस्यैतानि कर्मनामान्येव |', having depth and the breadth of complete, whole and entirety of *Krishna-Consciousness* transcending the duality of his empirical existence. He should be seen as having no other purpose, function or desire, 'न मे पार्थास्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किञ्चन | नानवाप्तमवाप्तव्यं वर्त एव च कर्मणि ||', his desire being only to fulfill the divine intent and purpose in creation· 'लोकसंग्रहमेवापि संपश्यन्कर्तुमर्हसि', justifying the description which *Shvetashvatara* Up.(V.2-4,12) gave to *Brahman*, 'य एकोऽवर्णो बहुधा शक्तियोगात्वर्णाननेकान्निहितार्थो दधाति | वि चैति चान्ते विश्व आदौ स देवः स नो बुद्ध्या शुभया संयुनक्तु || त्वं स्त्री त्वं पुमान्असि त्वं कुमार उत वा कुमारी | त्वं जीर्णो दण्डेन वांञ्छसि त्वं जातो भवसि विश्वतोमुखः || नीलः पतङ्गो हरितो लोहिताक्षस्तडिद्गर्भ ऋतवः समुद्राः | अनादिमत्त्वं विभुत्वेन वर्तसे यतो जातानि भुवनानि विश्वा ||'.

Krishna represents this world as well to the worlds beyond, beyond the world of words, like the waves merging with the ocean; ocean being no different than the waves. The ocean never merges with the waves; it is always the waves which merge with the ocean. The ocean becomes revealed through the waves, but it is always the waves which make the ocean seen. The ocean never comes, therefore, one should never try to fix one's attention on the ocean. One should not even fix one's attention on the waves and say, *This is the Ocean.* So do not fix yourself and do not say this wave is the ocean. The *Krishna's form* represents and reveals the *Krishna* as *Essence.* Those who ponder over historicity of *Krishna* without trying to be enlightened of *the Krishna* as *Essence* would miss the point and fail to see his presence in the elements the air, fire, water, space and touch, in the life and in attributes and inclinations having spread in the manifestation as warp and woof - 'ओतश्च प्रोतश्चेति'. *Krishna* dwelling in all manifestation as *Purusha*, there is being nothing else not covered by him, nothing else not pervaded by him. Therefore, *Isha Upanishadic* declares 'यस्तु सर्वाणि भूतानि आत्मन्येवानुपश्यति | सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं ततो न विजुगुप्सते ||' should be understood as stating where every one sees *Brahman* as every creatures and every creature as *Brahman*, such one will not feel revulsion from such experience. *Shetashvatara Up* describes the comprehensive descent of *divine essence* as under 'य एकोऽवर्णो बहुधा शक्तियोगाद्वर्णाननेकान्निहितार्थो दधाति | वि चैति चान्ते विश्वमादौ सदेवः स नो बुद्ध्या शुभया संयुनक्तु || तदेवाग्निस्तदादित्यस्तद्वायुस्तदु चन्द्रमाः | तदेव शुक्रं तद्ब्रह्म तदापस्तत्प्रजापतिः || त्वं स्त्री त्वं पुमनासि त्वं कुमार उत वा कुमारी | त्वं जीर्णो दण्डेन वञ्चसि त्वं जातो भवसि विश्वतो मुखः || नीलपतङ्गो हरितो लोहिताक्षस्तडिद्गर्भ ऋतवः समुद्राः | अनादिमत्त्वं विभुत्वेन वर्तसे यतो जातानि भुवनानि विश्वा ||'.

Krishna is one who accepts life in all its facets, in all its climates and colors, not choosing but accepting one and rejecting others, declaring 'मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना | मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः ||' as पूर्णावतार - manifestation complete in all respects, free, limitlessly free and fearlessness accepting every thing with love, compassion, courage, accepting and facing battle in life and fighting them, utterly non violent, nothing limiting him, nor bound by any rules of morality or conduct nor hesitating to plunge in fire and fury of War when it becomes unavoidable. He accepts the nectar, and yet he is not afraid of poison, knowing the deathless faces death free from fear, there being no ground which he has not tread, no place where he fears or falters, no limits then he transcends the shackles of *samsara*, his all doubts resolved, all his deeds terminate, his freedom founded from his experience of self-knowledge and enlightenment. *Krishna's* luminous form is like the dew drop on lotus leaf, arrestingly beautiful in the light of the early morning sun, which disappears on being enlightened of *Krishna's essence* as the infinite and eternal. Before he disappeared he lived a life of incomparable joy and blissfulness, of gratitude and prayer, sinking his eternal splendour in unimaginable *forms*, the treasure that is incalculable in the temporal lives of many people, close and familiar enough to be grasped and yet far enough to be strange and mysterious.

Therefore, seeking *divine essence* based on traditionally accepted *forms* becomes difficult if such acceptance becomes a matter of belief and faith on some persons, religion. Important thing is not to determine which among the different forms truly represent the *divine essence* but how the *divine essence* has been expressed by different persons, in different place in different periods in different *forms*. Therefore those who do not accept the *divine essence* as having a *form* or without *forms*, without an egalitarian and universal perspective, they will never understand *Krishna*, who has clearly said that he himself is the *Brahman, the Prime Existence* 'पितामहस्य जगतो माता धाता पितामहः |', 'सर्वभूतानि कौन्तेय प्रकृतिं यान्ति मामिकाम् | कल्पक्षये पुनस्तानि कल्पादौ विसृजाम्यहम् ||', 'मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना | मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः ||', 'अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्व भूताशयस्थितः | अहमादिश्च मध्यं च भूतानामन्त एव च ||', 'कालोऽस्मि लोकक्षयकृत्प्रवृद्धो लोकान्समाहर्तुमिह प्रवृत्तः |' अविभक्तं च भूतेषु विभक्तमिव च स्थितम् | भूतभर्तृ च तज्ज्ञेयं ग्रसिष्णु प्रभविष्णु च ||'.

Krishna's form is to be understood even as *Brahman* is understood with the image of *Vishnu* is used for meditation, seeing *Krishna-Consciousness* in operation in life as a child, as mischievous adolescent, a devoted son, a compassionate friend, shrewd and well respected counselor for the kings of his day and nemesis to the enemies, *Krishna's* every thought, speech and action as *divine intent* and

purpose accepting अमृत and never rejecting हालाहल, transcending all the dualities in primordial life through choice less awareness, accepting the two sides of the coin as of *That One Reality,* accepting both sides as independent and relevant. *Krishna* is that paradoxical form which simple minded devotees accept as belief and faith without hesitation or questioning, while the intellectuals see in every *form* and every temporal action the *divine essence* pulsating as spiritual content, without separating one from the other, without selecting one and rejecting the other, selecting some and denying the others, without pitting one against the other, but both as the comprehensive whole, as one destroying the cruel and unrighteous and as one compassionate and protective of the weak and needy, a man of wisdom, a philosopher, a visionary and a great human being, पुरुषोत्तम, god of gods, देवादिदेव, comprehensive *divine essence* infused in *human form*, वत्सल responding and becoming effulgent in every one and in every desire.

When one perceives *Krishna* in such expansive, comprehensive all pervading character being receptive to the tone and tenor of *Krishna's* flute, with mind attuned to his song, then all questions about his birth, the date of his birth, whether he was divine one, born a human or a human one who rose to be divine will cease and become resolved, the discus destroying the obscurity and ignorance one reveling in *Krishna-Consciousness. Krishna* would then be seen in the mysterious life, in the clouds, in stars, in flowers, in flowing river and find him wherever you look, as one born as mystery, ending all knowledge, intelligence, reasoning and rationalization every moment in time and eternally all the time. New door will be opened with new perception and new awareness. Experience *Krishna,* the great philosopher, luminous visionary, supremely enlightened to his inherent *divine essence* and as the shining symbol and dominant metaphor to his inherent *divine essence,* influencing the religious, social, cultural and literary life of his times and the generations to come. *Krishna* can neither be judged nor faulted on empirical grounds.

One should build relationship with *Krishna* as सत्, *the Prime Existence* since nothing else exists in *samsara* as eternal, immutable and the indestructible. सत्सङ्ग is not congregation with noble minded people, listening and exchanging religious, philosophical thoughts and singing in unision adoration of सत्, *the Prime Existence*, or of one or other divine effulgeneces. सत्सङ्ग is establishing relationship with सत्- the eternal, immutable and indestructible *Prime Exsitence.*

Bhagavata Purana declares that relationship should be established with *Krishna* who is *Govind*, the embodiment of सत्, *the Prime Existence* which is possible neither through *Yoga, Samkhya,* righteousness nor through rituals, penance and austerities, neither through scriptures, sacrifices or pilgrimage nor through performance of injunctions nor through renunciation but only through estabIoshig relationship with him - 'नो गेधयति मां योगो न सांख्यं धर्म एव च | न स्वाधयायस्तपस्त्यागो नेष्टापूर्त न दक्षिणा || व्रतानि यज्ञश्छदांसि तीर्थानि नियमा यमाः | यथावरुन्धे सत्सगः सर्वसङ्गपहो हि माम्||'. It is only their attachment to him that *asuaras*, peactitioners of magic and illusion, animals and birds, *gandharvas, apsaras* and *nagas*, adepts, practitioners and mysterious people, people belonging to different classes, women and low born ones, endowed with all the three attributes established relationship with me, even as did many others like *Vritrasura, Prahlad, Bali, Bana, Vibhishana,* hunchbacked *Kubja* as well *Gopis* of *Vraja* established relationmship even though they had not studued scriptures, nor had observed any views norpracticed any austerities and penances 'सत्सङ्गेन हि दैतेया यातुधाना मृगाः खगाः | गन्धर्वाप्सरसो नागाः सिद्धाश्चरणगुह्यकाः || विद्याधरा मनुष्येषु वैश्याः शूद्राः स्त्रियोऽन्त्यजाः | रजस्तमःप्रकृतयस्मिंस्तस्मिन्युगेऽनघ || बहवो मत्पदं प्राप्तास्त्वाष्ट्रकायाधवादयः | वृषपर्वा बलिर्बाणो मयश्चाथ विभीषणः || सुग्रीवो हनुमानृक्षो गजो गृध्रो वणिक्पथः | व्याधः कुब्जा व्रजे गोप्यो यज्ञपत्न्यस्तथापरे || ते नाधीतश्रुतिगणा नोपासितमहत्तमाः | अव्रतातप्ततपसः सत्सङ्गान्मामुपागताः ||'.

Relationship should be established with *Krishna* which is possible neither through *Yoga, Samkhya*, righteousness nor through rituals, penance and austerities, neither through scriptures, sacrifices or pilgrimage nor through performance of injunctions nor through renunciation but only through establishing relationship with him - 'नो रोधयति मां योगो न सांख्यं धर्म एव च | न स्वाधयायस्तपस्त्यागो नेष्टापूर्त न दक्षिणा || व्रतानि यज्ञश्छदांसि तीर्थानि नियमा यमाः | यथावरुन्धे सत्सगः सर्वसङ्गपहो हि माम्||'. It is only their attachment to him that *asuaras*,

peactitioners of magic and illusion, animals and birds, *gandharvas, apsaras* and *nagas*, adepts, practitioners and mysterious people, people belonging to different classes, women and low born ones, endowed with all the three attributes established relationship with me, even as did many others like *Vritrasura, Prahlad, Bali, Bana, Vibhishana,* hunchbacked *Kubja* as well *Gopis* of *Vraja* established relationmship even though they had not studued scriptures, nor had observed any viws norpracticed any austerities and penances 'सत्सङ्गेन हि दैतेया यातुधाना मृगाः खगाः | गन्धर्वाप्सरो नागाः सिद्धाश्चरणागुह्यकाः || विद्याधरा मनुष्येषु वैश्याः शूद्राः स्त्रियोऽन्त्यजाः | रजस्तमःप्रकृतयस्तस्मिंस्तस्मिन्युगेऽनघ || बहवो मत्पदं प्राप्तास्त्वाष्ट्रकायाधवादयः | वृषपर्वा बलिर्बाणो मयश्चाथ विभीषणः || सुग्रीवो हनुमानृक्षो गजो गृध्रो वणिक्पथः | व्याधः कुब्जा व्रजे गोप्यो यज्ञपत्न्यस्तथापरे || ते नाधीतश्रुतिगणा नोपासितमहत्तमाः | अव्रतातप्ततपसः मत्सङ्गान्मामुपागताः ||'.

That is the difference one who is ignorant and one who is wise in Wisdom. When one drops duality and discrimination, choosing and selecting, one ends up enveloping every thing in the comprehensive whole accepting every thing in *Krishna* as he is, as the mystery of life, as the space between, within and without, finding in the clouds, in stars, in flowers and in flowing rivers, in tress and mountains finding *Krishna* in every thing and every where one sees. *Krishna* will then be a man of *Wisdom* to be accessed intellectually as well as a man to be adored emotively. It is the mystic who understands *Krishna* as the *luminous divine essence* reflected in the *Krishna-forms* as various waves rising and falling on the face of the ocean. It is the devotee who sees *Krishna* in every mood and in every movement. Even as one becomes receptive, reflects and meditates on his thoughts, ideas, speech and actions, all the discrepancies and inconsistencies become resolved in integrated harmony and comprehensive entirety, the devotee becoming emotively involved in adoration of *Krishna*. *Krishna's* love and grace is open to all. In whatever manner they approach *Krishna* on like manner they become integrated in him 'येषु येषु च भावेषु भक्त्या त्वां परमर्षयः | उपासीनाः प्रपद्यन्ते संसिद्धिं तद्वदस्व मे ||'.

Though the choice is *human*, the gain will surely be divine. When one delineates the personality of *Krishna*, one has to draw the picture not with white colours but also with dark shades, the luminous sun-shine as well as the dark nights, bountiful rains as well destructive storms, pleasant springs as well as scorching summers, flowers as well as the thorns, mother's mellowness as well as father's fury as the *divine grace* accepted as well *divine fury.* When God *Wills*, the human being is not given to decline, accepting every event and every consequence as *divine intent* and *purpose,* yet with full consciousness of the negative contours should not overwhelm one in appreciative the positive attributes and inclinations.

Making slight change in *Angelus Silesius* poem one can as well say, *Though Krishna a thousand times in Mathura be born, If he's not born in thee, thy soul is still forlorn. Neither the flute nor the sermons will ever save thy soul. The terrible discus in thine heart alone can make thee whole.* An enlightened person will experience him as wisdom, knowledge, breath, sight, hearing, earth, water, air, ether, luminosity and absence of luminosity, desire and absence of desire, anger and absence of anger, righteousness & absence of righteousness & all other things - 'स वा अयमात्मा ब्रह्म विज्ञानमयो मनोमयः प्राणमयश्चक्षुर्मयः श्रोत्रमयः पृथ्वीमय आपोमयो वायुमय आकाशमयस्तेजोमयोऽतेजोमयः काममयोऽकाममयः क्रोधमयोऽक्रोधमयो धर्ममयोऽधर्ममयः सर्वमयस्तद्यदेतदिदमयोऽदोमय इति |'.

It is difficult to convey their experiences not being conclusions reasoned and rationalized through mind and intellect but experiences experienced through *supra-sensory* instruments of cognition. It is difficult to understand them since their experiences no longer exists for them to communicate and the words and verbalization being used for expressing their experiences not doing justice to their experience. The experiences of the seers are not there now: only their expressions echoing as vibrations. Therefore, they may need to be decoded for the contemporary mind to access it and understand. People accept *Krishna* as a person because it is easier and convenient for one to beg and plead - याचना accepting him as having a *form* and using *Bhakti* as an instrument than being passionate for *Jnana* seek grace as प्रार्थना which is enjoyment and acknowledgement for things ordained - 'तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा'.

Samadhi does not mean *Death* but being *established in Intelligence.* One truly understands

Krishna whose intelligence is well-established as the seers and sages did establish in earlier times and being enlightened saw *Brahman* and the entire world in a grain of sand and heaven in a wild flower, held infinity in their palm and eternity in an hour. They lived the remaining years of their lives in the primordial world in gratitude and prayer, joy and blissfulness, keeping their heart and mind in tune with *Brahman*, recollecting, remembering and recounting their every moment being nourished and invigorated by their authentic experience of unimaginable joy and blissfulness. It is human need that obliges them to express their experience in words, well aware that the words return with mind not achieving the purpose and fully conscious that it is human failing that makes them cling to mind, speech and breath, the scriptures, rites and rituals instead of using them to cross over the void between the known and unknown, 'यदिदमस्मिन्ब्रह्मपुरे दहरं पुण्डरीकं वेश्म दहरोऽस्मिन्नन्तराकाशस्तस्मिन्यदन्तस्तदन्वेष्टव्यं...', as one would take *Vishnu's* image to become enlightened of *Brahman* 'नामोपास्मव ब्रह्मेति ब्रह्मबुद्ध्या | यथा प्रतिमां विष्णुबुद्ध्योपास्ते तद्वत्||' as *Shankara* recommends.

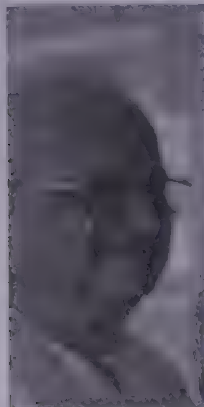
The *Krishna-form* represents and reveals the *Krishna-Consciousness. Krishna* is *Tao* to a *Zen* Master, the *Complete*, the *Comprehensive Conclusion*.

The perfect Way (Tao) is without difficulty,
Save that it avoids pitching and choosing,
Only when you stop liking and disliking,
Will all clearly be understood.
A split hair's difference,
And heaven and earth are set apart !
If you want to get to the plain Truth,
Be not concerned with right and wrong.
The conflict between the right and wrong
Is the sickness of the mind.
When one recognizes beauty as beautiful,
there is already ugliness ;
When every one recognizes goodness as good,
there is already evil.
To be and not to be arise mutually,
Difficult and easy are mutually realized.
Long and short are mutually contrasted.
High and low are mutually posited.
Before and after are in mutual sequence.

In *Mahabharata*, *Vyasa* emphasized the events and incidents not only those relating to *Krishna* but also to those relating to others, to demonstrate different contours and various shades of attributes and inclinations saying, *this is the life, accept it as the whole and not in fragments*. Therefore, to be wise of the mystery that is *Krishna*, one has to traverse the path laid down by him, guided by the sign-points without being distracted, confused and bewildered by the events and incidents, the colours, shades of light and darkness, as *upanishdic* teacher declare, '*The narrow and ancient is the Path that stretches far, which he has found and realized. On this Path there is white, blue, yellow, green and red. The Path was discovered by the wise ones, and by that they traverse, the knower of Brahman, performer of the auspicious actions and the luminous. By that Path, experiencing the grandeur and not hesitating to walk the Path, strewn by thorns and stones, myths and legends, they become delivered from mortality of the external form to the immortality of the internal essence*'.

V. About the Author, the Philosopher

About the Author, the Philosopher



Shri Nagesh D. Sonde

As a student of religious philosophy,
every step is a step on the Path to Perfection,
conscious of the pitfalls and the distance
for the luminous light to reveal its lights.

Therefore, he has sought to recollect what he has read,
to rearrange thoughts and to record them in words
but surely not to communicate as Wisdom gained.

Who having written the words
found them read by some and appreciated by others,
feeling satisfied if they have shed if little light was shed
on their own Path chosen for themselves.

No other desire nor any expectation for fulfillment.

Shankara says that although mystical truth can be arrived
through scriptures, logic and rational reasoning, in the absence of a mind unhindered and
influenced by senses, comprehensive assimilation is not possible.

'यद्यपि न्यायागमाभ्यां निर्धारितोऽदस्तथैवेत्यवगम्यते तथाप्यत्यन्तसूक्ष्मेष्वर्थेषु बाह्यनिपयासक्तमनसः
स्वभावप्रवृत्तम्यासत्यां गुरुतरायां श्रद्धयां दुरवगमत्वं स्यादित्याह श्रद्धत्स्वेति |'

Books written by Nagesh D. Sonde

Nagesh D. Sonde has written about 12 books in Konkani and 19 books in English language since 1976 mainly on religious and philosophical subjects.

The following is the list of books in English languages.

1.	Sri Madhva's Commentary on *Isha & Isha & Kena Upanishad.*	
2.	Sri Madhva's Commentary on *Katha Upanishad.*	
3.	Sri Madhva's Commentary on *Mandukya Upanishad.*	
4.	Sri Madhva's Commentary & Summation on *Bhagavad Gita.*	
5.	Narada's Aphorisms on *Bhakti.*	
6.	A study on Three *Vedic Suktas*	
7.	Commentary on Sri Ramana Maharshi's *Upadesha Saram.*	
8.	Commentary on Sri Ramana Maharshi's *Sat Darshna.*	
9.	Philosophy of Sri Ramana Maharshi.	
10.	Sri Shankara's Hymn of *Dakshinamurti* with *Manasollasa.*	
11.	Conservation and Preservation of Wealth	
12.	Commentary on *Sri Sukta.*	
13.	Life & Teachings of *Sri Manik Prabhu.*	
14.	Ganapati Atharvasheersha with brief Notes.	Rs. 100
15.	Dakshinatya Sarasvats.	Rs. 100
16.	*Asmi* Reflection on the Teachings of *Gautama Buddha* and *Ramana Maharshi*	Rs .400
17.	*Rigveda* A Study of Forty Hymns.	Rs .500
18.	Sri Shankara's *Sadhana Panchkam*	Rs. 200
19.	Krishna : A Study based on Mahabharata	Rs. 500

Only the books 14 to 19 are currently in stock with the Author

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Reviews on Books written by Nagesh D. Sonde

- **Sri Madhva's Commentary on Isha & Kena Upanishad**

"Sri Sonde has, in a spirit of deepest piety and devotion, brought out this edition of Sri Madhva's Bhashyas on two of the Upanishads, Isha and Kena. Both the Upanishads have been regarded as key texts for all three schools of Vedanta, Sri Sonde would have gladly had a Guru in flesh and blood to guide him in his spiritual studies but not finding one at hand laid himself at the feet of the Lord Sri Krishna himself".

- *Prof. S. Ramaswamy in Mountain Path, December, 1992.*

- **Sri Madhva's Commentary on Mandukya Upanishad**

"Continuing his solid work in expounding the approach of Acharya Madhva to the Upanishads. Sri Sonde highlights in this work the special features of the Acharya's interpretation . . . The text of the Upanishad is followed by a commentary o the Acharya. Sri Sonde adds notes of clarification to his faithful tradition, making the book a notable addition to the literature on the Mandukya".

- Late Sri Madhva P. Pamdit, Sri Aurobindo Ashrama Aurobindo Ashrama, November 1991.

" . . . The learned and spiritually awakened author Sri Sonde reveals a remarkable breadth of mind and mastery over English language. Every line vibrates with Mumukshatva or yearning for liberation . . ."

- Swami Srikanthanandaji, Ramaakrishna Yoga Pitha, Mallur, Karnatak.

"In the three volumes (Isha/Kena, Katha and Mandukya) under review Mr. Sonde gives us a readable elegant translation of the Upanishads. . . Mr Sonde has brought out the acute intellectual arguments of the Acharya, pointing out the untenability of Shankara's interpretation . . . Sri Madhva strictly adheres to the principles of interpretations . . . Sri Madhva's style is brief and difficult to understand without commentaries . . "

- Late Dr. P. Nagaraja Rao, Rtd Tagore & Vivekanand Professor, Madras University.

"Nagesh D. Sonde, an ardent scholar of Madhva tradition, has translated the (Mandukya) Upanishad and Madhva's Bhashya in English and also added his own gloss on the bhashya to explain certain intricate points. The book contains an elaborate introduction which would acquaint a lay reader with the main concepts of Mandukya Upanishad. The editor's grounding in Madhva Philosophy renders the translation of the original commentary authentic."

- Shri N. B Patil in Vol 73, Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bombay 1998.

- **Sri Madhva's Commentary on Katha Upanishad**

"This is the second publication of Sri Sonde containing the Commentary of Sri Madhva on Kathopanishad... His introduction in 22 pages is lucid explanation on the importance of the contents of the Upanishad . . . The reviewer and the scholarly world keenly await further publications for the remaining eight Upanishads".

- Hindu News Magazine, 14th July 1992.

- **Sri Madhva's Commentary and Summation on Bhagavad Gita.**

"This book is a translation in English of Sri Madhva's Bhashya of the Bhagavad Gita and Tatparya Nirnaya. This is supplemented by the explanatory notes of the author. . . the book is a most welcome addition to the wealth of commentaries on the Gita, which is an inexhaustible subject and is bound to be immense value to those who aspire to serious study of Vedanta".

- Hindu News Magazine, 27th August 1996.

" (Mr. Sonde) appears to be quite conversant with the Philosophy of Madhvacharya in particular and Indian Philosophy in general. He also seems to be quite good in his knowledge of Sanskrit and also English. His foreword and Epilogue to the book under review are well written, almost in an impassioned prose. His epilogue especially shows his mystic leanings. There is no doubt that the Author has immense regard for Sri Madhva and made a very sincere and serious attempt at translating the text of the Gita, the Bhashya and Tatparya...."

- Dr. S. G. Mudgal, in Vol 73, the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bombay 1998.

- **Narada's Aphorisms on Bhakti :**

"What is special about this publication is that each rendering from Sanskrit Original is followed by exclusive supporting passages from the Vedas, Upanishads, Gita and Bhagavat etc. Explanations of nama, japa, sound in Vedic sense and other relevant topics are satisfying . . . The translations are precise and the notes most helpful. A welcome addition to the extant literature on Bhakti".

- Late Sri Madhav P. Pamdit, Sri Aurobindo Ashrama, In Mountain Path, December 1990.

"Mr. Sonde uses the word "Communion" instead of devotion for the Sanskrit word Bhakti. Sage Narada is considered as a Parama Bhagavata and hence his aphorisms - sutras - on Bhakti are translated and annotated in English for the consumption of all . . . The author has provided the original sutra in Sanskrit followed by a translation of the same. After that he provides elaborate discussion on that citing various references from different texts . . ."

- Hindu News Magazine, Madras, 15th October, 1991.

- **A Study on Three Vedic Suktas (Nasadiya, Hiranyagarbha Purusha)**

"It (the book) deserves repeated reading and cogitation. . . translation varies from the traditionally accepted interpretation and I find it revelatory of your insight and reveals the intuitive vision of a rishi to a great extent. Your general way of approach also befits the modern mind. You interpretation of Purusha Sukta is appreciable".

- Swamy Muni Narayana Prasad - Sri Narayan Gurukula, Varkala, Kerala.

"Sri Sonde has characteristic style, original insight. I especially note the interpretation of the word Tamas as not darkness but absence of apprehension".

- Swami Srikanthanandaji, Sri Ramakrishna Yogashra, Petha, Mallur

"The book is thought provoking and needs a careful study for understanding the Vedic Suktas. It presupposes a study of the Upanishads.".

- Dr. D. Rama Rao, in Tapovana Prasad, Novemebr, 1994, Chinmayananda Ashrama.

- **Sri Ramana Maharshi's Upadesh Saram**

"The well known verses of the sage (Sri Ramana Maharshi) have been edited here in Roman script and translated with explanations by Nagesh D. Sonde The explanation which is extensive puts the verses in proper context . and brings out adequately the truths and mystical suggestions implied in the cryptic verses and as such the present publication is most welcome addition to the wealth of literature available on Life and Teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi."

- K. V. Sarma, Adyar Library Bulletin 1996.

- **Sri Shankara's Hymn to Sri Dakshinamurti**

"The present author (Sri Sonde) has translated the Vartika and the slokas in English language and offered additional explanatory notes by way of clarification to the modern reader. The wisdom of the Vedas and Upanishads have been brought out clearly by the present author. There are relevant quotations from almost all Upanishads in the text . . . The Commentary of Sri Sureshvara and the additional lucid explanations given by the Author provide a healthy trend of inquiry and rational approach to every aspect of the prevailing religious beliefs. . ."

- Dr. D. Sri Rama Rao, Tapovan Prasad, March 1995, Chinamayananad Ashrama.

"Nagesh D. Sonde deserves to be congratulated for translating the Vartika and shloks in an excellent manner. Explanatory notes to the Hymns are rich and profound in content. The moderately priced book ought to be read by all those who nurture misgivings about Advaita Vedanta".

- Dr. Satish K. Kapoor, Prabuddha Bharat, November, 1994.

- **Asmi : Reflection in the Teachings of Buddha and Ramana Maharshi.**

"The Present Book 'ASMI' is an honest attempt by its author Shri Nagesh D. Sonde, at studying the lives and teachings of Gautama Buddha and Ramana Maharshi and in sincerely presenting his responses to them in the hope and belief they would truly represent the essence of Their Teachings... The book deserves serious consideration and will be read with interest both by the learned scholars as well as by spiritual seekers."

- Dr. Karana Singh, Member Rajya Sabha, new Delhi 9th September 2004.

"Asmi is an unusual book, dealing with the Self and awareness. Exploration of the inward self is the theme.... A brief preface and a fairly elaborate introduction tell a reader about the purpose of author's endevaour. Both these should not be skipped over ... The author recognizes the merit of unflinching devotion and yet prefers to be rational in comprehending the great spiritual truths."

- Shri N.B. Patil Journal of the Anantacharya Indological Research Institute, Mumbai.

'Nagesh Sonde takes an intimate look at the knowledge traditions associated with Gautama Buddha and Ramana Maharshi to rediscover the wisdom they encapsulate. A narrative that is at once erudite, insightful and eminently readable."

- Prabhuddha Bharata, ADVAITA ASHRAMA, Ramakrishna Mission, P.O. AMAYAVATI

- **Rigveda A study of the Forty Hymns**

"Apart from the fact that the hymns are learnt by rote, there has been a need to familiarize the general reader with the nature and value of Vedic literature through English and other languages. The present work is designed to cater to the needs of the English knowing Sanskritists and is well suited for the purpose.

The introduction gives in a nut shell all the general information required by the reader. The work is done exceedingly well and will be of a great use to students of Vedic literature."

- M/s S. Revathy Hindu, Daily, Chennai.

"It is refreshing to find that you see the Rigveda is a way radically different from the one that is found in Scholars and laymen alike ... One thing that you have seen which, as far as I know, has not been seen by any other person, and that is that the Rigveda is a collection of all sorts of things which were available at that time in the oral tradition of India, and that the primary task was to collect and preserve every thing available as far as possible and not to bother unduly about the nature or quality of the content that was to be collected and preserved".

- Shri Daya Krishna Editor, Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research, Jaipur

'In line with the Anthologies the present book under review is also noteworthy to mention. Sri Nagesh D. Sonde is an independent researcher in Indology. His writings are emerged from his pure experiences, deep thinking and contemplation and his elevated interpretations are of high spiritual

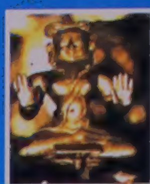
order.

The selection, exposition, introduction, translation are very apt and appropriate. I congratulate the author for his thoroughness in explaining the hidden wisdom of Rigveda for a larger benefit of modern society.

- M. Prabhakar Rao Sri Venkateshvar University Oriental Journal Vol XLIX - 2006

'Nagesh D. Sonde is a septuagenarian philosopher delving deep in the traditional philosophical literature of India. After every dip in the scriptural texts or biographical study of great philosophers of this land, he produces a cute readable book...The selected 40 hymns for his compilation and studied them at length...The pages that follow the introduction are extremely interesting in the modern setting. The translation of the hymns is quite lucid and it is in conformity with the literary as well as allegorical meanings of the riks

- N. B. Patil Journal of the Anathacharya Indological Research Institute Vol VIII.



Veda Vyasa

Mahabharata is Testimony and Testament
not of Devakiputra Krishna or Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa alone
but of the spiritual, cultural and social ethos of Bharatavarsha
It contains many mystical suggestions concealed from place to place,
which Vyasa knew and his son Shuka as well,
doubtful whether Sanjaya knew.
Mahabharata should be read
by becoming receptive, reflective and meditative
of the concealed mystical suggestions.
Only then will one be enlightened
of the divine essence concealed in Krishna-form.
Then alone would one be able to live life basing
every enterprise (अर्थ) and desire (काम) on the solid foundations of धर्म.

Vyasa with confidence declared that whatever is in Mahabharata
is to be found elsewhere. Whatever is not here is not found any where else.
Like wise the present Author can with confidence declare that
whatever is stated in his book has all been sourced from every where else
and nothing here is to be found which is not spoken or written earlier.



Nagesh D. Sonde